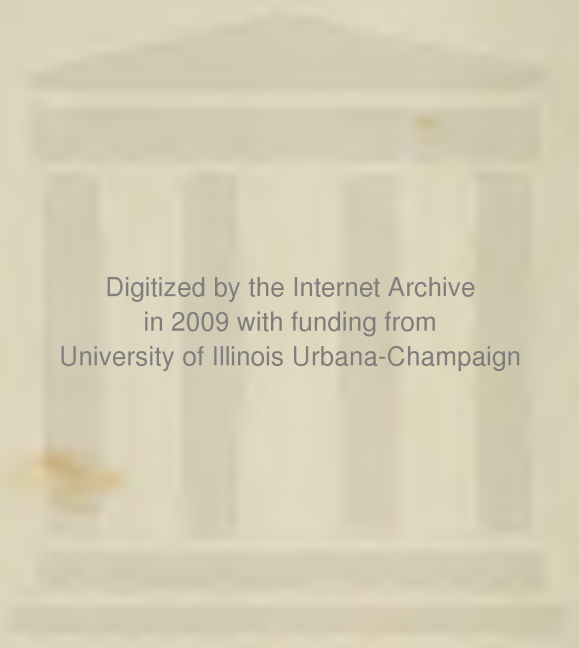


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# SIR ARTHUR BOUVERIE.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“LADY GRANARD’S NIECES.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# SIR ARTHUR BOUVERIE.

## CHAPTER I.

Lady ! in thy dark bright eye  
Wit and beauty lightly play,  
Yet athwart I can descry  
Seat for glance of love to lay.

Lady ! on thy damask cheek  
Though thy scornful brow says nay,  
Rosy blushes love bespeak  
Bids thy fond knight yet to stay.

Trust me, lady, once again  
Bend on him that look of love ;  
Strive, oh strive his heart to gain  
Fond and true his love will prove.

Ah ! thine accents soft and low,  
Clearly tell the secret power,  
That hath flush'd thy cheek and brow,  
That will bless the bridal hour !

Lovely sparklers ! bright and beaming  
Shedding love whene'er they're gleaming,  
Eyes of black or Heaven's own shade,  
Stars from Night's dark mantle stray'd—  
Gems worth all the diamond's blaze,  
Lightning in their own pure rays !  
Mischief in their beauty wooing—  
Gaze on them 'tis your undoing !  
Shun their smiles that now are glancing,  
Shun their power though entrancing  
Linger not to gaze awhile !  
Tempted—stay not—swiftly fly them  
For their looks alas ! belie them,  
And they kill, yet still they smile !

Pshaw ! angle well—despair not, I whisper'd to a  
friend,  
She cannot hold out long, sir, she'll give in at the  
end :  
For the women love to tease us, and love to make  
us wait,  
But angle well—despair not...the fish will bite the  
bait.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the endeavours of  
Cecil and Kate to prevent any rumours of the

real cause of the separation between the former and his wife from getting into circulation, it necessarily became soon known. People were not satisfied with hearing it ascribed to the plausible, but not easily believed reason of incompatibility of temper, because they well knew that many married couples, though hating each other most heartily still contrive to live together on apparent terms of cordiality. So the Bouveries' friends and acquaintances immediately set to work to find out the actual facts of the case, and were not long before they did; for Sir Arthur, when he left England, having forwarded a paper to his nephew, in which he formally relinquished every claim on the Bouverie estates, and at the same time intimated, that he wished for no pecuniary assistance, the contents of the document became partially known by their effects, which at once placed Cecil in full possession of his grandfather's property, and entirely frustrated his idea of hushing the matter up, and allowing his

uncle a full share of it. They saw Cecil enjoying Sir Arthur's wealth, and naturally enough enquired why the latter so generously settled it on his nephew, while at the same time he disembarrassed him of a wife, whom the gossips had long ago decided he was tired of, and in less than a month the mystery was solved, owing, however, in a great measure to Mr. Ramsay happening to mention something of the truth to a friend, who for the satisfaction of his neighbours generously made the secret public property. Yet without this opportune revelation it could not have remained entirely unguessed at; for the above reasons, as well as the fact of Amy accompanying her father abroad, would have consequently led the curiosity of their mutual friends to the right end. As it was the intelligence spread like wild-fire, and after assuming for a time the shapes of various and contradictory rumours, at last settled down into the exact truth.

And people wondered over Sir Arthur's



history, as they wondered over an exciting novel ; it was interesting ; it was new ; and its recital at the time relieved many a dull half hour that hung heavy on the hands of the parasite of fashion—scandal certainly is in the world's estimation a sovereign remedy against *ennui* ! Their comments upon it, nevertheless, were not seasoned with a quarter so much charity as those with which they would have treated a tale of fiction.

Well, time passed on, and the tongues that had been busily employed in discussing Sir Arthur's and his daughter's faults, at length became tired of the subject, and passed it by when mentioned with an insipid observation, or dropped it altogether. They also grew accustomed to see Cecil Bouverie in possession of his newly acquired riches, and only thought it a pity that his uncle and wife did not die to crown his felicity, by the former transferring his title to him, and the latter leaving him free to marry again. A few there were, indeed,

who remembering Amy's kindness of heart, pitied her, and amongst the few Mrs. Beresford and Kate Bouverie stood conspicuous. They did not suffer one whisper of ill to be breathed against her in their presence, and the latter's friends were in particular much surprised when she, instead of reflecting severely or even quietly upon the dishonourable conduct of her uncle, directly contradicted their ill-natured additions to the real story; upheld Amy; at once professed a disbelief of her knowledge of the relationship existing between her and Sir Arthur before the late occurrences took place; intimated the subject was a disagreeable one to her, and told them she wished to drop it. Cecil, meanwhile, was not much troubled with observations or enquiries about the matter, he being one of those men who never talk of their family affairs, or suffer others to do so when they can help it; and thus left to himself he hid whatever feelings of regret and anger he had under his usual cold reserve of manner.

Far different, however, did his sister seem to what she used to be in her outward appearance of cheerfulness, for the recent events left a weight upon her mind that she could not easily shake off, although the sudden accession of wealth they brought her would have soon reconciled many to their occurrence. But with Kate it was not so; and she would have willingly lost the splendid fortune her brother now settled on her to replace her uncle and cousin in the rank of society from which they had retired. She loved Sir Arthur yet, even with filial affection; and as for Amy, whom a strong feeling of compassion taught her to like, she gradually assumed a higher place in her opinion, as she looked back upon her past conduct, and with a woman's penetration perceived her love for Cecil still predominant through all the wilfulness and anger she had displayed. She guessed his dislike towards her had at last become too apparent to escape even the willingly blinded eyes of love, and attributed

her change of character to its actual reason, namely to the wish of rivalling Lady Haviland; of forcing him to admire though he could not love her. It is woman alone who can read woman's heart!

Another cause for the dulness of the house in Eaton Square, was the absence of two of its former inmates, as Frank and Mr. Ramsay albeit not, perhaps, the most agreeable of men were yet better to talk to than no one, and while Kate sat at her music or work in the drawing-room on the evenings when she had no engagement to call her abroad, she often wished the former argumentative gentleman were near her to answer the observations she occasionally made, instead of his good-natured but quiet mother, who never sustained a conversation for more than ten minutes, five of which were always taken up with the replies of the person she addressed. It was then with a sort of delight on one of the evenings just alluded to, about two months after the separation of her



brother and his wife, that she hailed the entrance of Edith L'Estrange into the little boudoir where she was sitting, and soon after saw Seymour Glenallan also join her.

"Edith, dearest, how glad I am to see you," said she, "Seymour, how could you stay away such an unconscionable time?—With Eveline?—at Mandeville House?—Well, how is she? ...as childish as ever?—have you any news?"

"News?" echoed Seymour—"the strangest news I have heard of late respects your uncle and Mrs. Bouverie."

"Hush, hush," said Kate, leading him away from Edith.

"It is true, then?" asked he.

"True?" answered Kate—"yes; however, never mind that now—tell me all about yourself and Eveline."

"About Eveline?" rejoined Seymour; "well, so I will; but come to this window, Kate; I do not wish to make Mrs. Beresford

and Mrs L'Estrange my confidantes as well as you."

And Kate walked to the window he pointed out to her in the front drawing-room, threw herself on a bergère, and asked him what he had to tell her.

"This," answered he; "Eveline is more than half in love with Captain Stanhope."

Kate gave him a quiet stare, and a quiet smile.

"You take matters very complacently," said she.

"I do," replied Seymour; "I am used to these strange turns of fortune. There was little Emma Whiting, you know, who served me the same trick by marrying old Barbesieux for the sake of his title; and again Louisa Vansittart, who about a couple of months after her engagement with me, chose to run away with that rascally cousin of hers; besides two or three others of whom I could tell simi-

lar tales. Well, as I said before, these freaks of fortune have made me what sentimental people call callous about such matters, and so I do not much care if Eveline does marry this clergyman's son."

"You must have a very great affection for her," said Kate, laughing.

"Pshaw! you know I never liked her more than as a pretty, good-natured child," replied Seymour—"I never pretended to love her."

Kate smiled.

"How do you stand at present with her?" rejoined she.

"Why, she continues to dance, laugh, and talk with Captain Stanhope, and grows a peevish little thing whenever I attempt to speak to her," answered Seymour.

"And what do you intend to do?" said Kate.

"Let her have him, to be sure—where is the use of thwarting the child, and making her miserable for life?" returned Seymour.

“ Yet she has a splendid fortune !”

“ It was not her fortune that made me determine to have her for a wife,” answered he, “ it was her childish simplicity and good temper ; however, the match will not do—I am too old for her, I suppose, and not as good-looking as Captain Stanhope, either.”

“ Her father, my dear Seymour, will never consent to the marriage !”

“ He will ; Stanhope is not a penniless adventurer—he will have about two thousand a-year from his father, and a queer old title, when some fifth cousin of his dies. I have been making enquiries, you see, for I did not want Eveline to throw herself away upon a needy fortune-hunter.”

Very disinterested of you,” said Kate.

“ To say the truth,” replied Seymour, carelessly, “ I am rather tired, after all, with Eveline’s excessive naïveté.”

“ And have you told her your present intentions ?”



“ Not a word of them ; nor do I mean to, as yet. I wish to be thoroughly satisfied of my suspicions before I act upon them.”

“ And what do you intend to do when the engagement is broken off?”

“ I ? oh ! I shall remain an old bachelor—unless you will have me, Kate.”

“ Thank you, I would rather not.”

“ Come—I do not think it would be so bad a match, pretty cousin ; we should not have any deep affection for each other, to be sure ; but what of that ? hundreds of very happy couples have not.”

“ Still, my dear Seymour, I do not think you will induce me to have you ; I would rather not marry upon a cool liking.”

“ That objection might be done away with, Kate—we might easily fall in love with one another.”

“ No, no,” said Kate, rising from her chair—“ love does not depend upon our will.”

“ A little, a little,” replied Seymour, follow-

ing her to Edith's side—" does it not, Mrs. Beresford?"

" No, I do not think it does," answered the good lady, with a heavy sigh, as she reflected that if it did, Frank, as a dutiful son, would have obeyed her wishes by falling in love with Kate—" No," said she, I do not think it does."

" It is all nonsense," mused Seymour—" all nonsense; half the people who are in love imagine themselves to be so. You certainly read of such a thing as true love, but you never meet with anything like it in real life; it is all nonsense. '

Edith L'Estrange looked up.

" Yes, Mrs. L'Estrange," continued he, " yes, I have spoken the truth; Kate will say so—will you not, pretty cousin? Bye-the-by, you and I are the only sensible people here, for I perceive, Mrs. Beresford and Mrs. L'Estrange entirely differ from my opinion."

" Nonsense!" murmured Edith.

“Exactly so!” returned Seymour—“What! do you affirm it too?”

“Not I,” answered Edith; and for a moment, she lifted her eyes to Seymour’s face, as if about to speak her sentiments upon the subject more explicitly, when suddenly a deep blush flushed her cheeks, and bending down her head, she turned towards Mrs. Beresford.

Kate and Seymour saw her colour rise, and as they walked into the other room to see a beautiful camellia which Kate had been given on the previous day, the former whispered to her cousin—

“Did I not tell you, Seymour, that Edith is, or has been, in love?”

“Yes,” answered he, “and I believe your suspicions to be truth. But hers is a disappointed affection, if I may judge from the look of utter listlessness she sometimes wears, for it bespeaks a wearied and unhappy spirit—perhaps some engagement was desolved, when her

father forced her to marry that old brute L' Estrange. Well, I pity her, because a woman of such exquisite feeling and talent must necessarily love truly and deeply."

"Better than I could love?" said Kate, with a smile.

"You love!" exclaimed Seymour, laughingly. "My dear Kate, you could not love at all—never flatter yourself that you could."

"And I suppose no one could love me then?" rejoined she.

"Oh! I do not say that," Seymour replied, in a slow, doctoral tone; "for as Mr. Beresford would say, women are dangerous creatures, and their beauty often commands the love and admiration which a sight of their hearts would entirely destroy. But," added he, suddenly turning round, "here is Mr. Beresford himself."

"Frank!" replied Kate, without even bending her eyes towards the door, "how can you talk such nonsense, Seymour; he will not be at

home for another month or so. He is in Scotland."

"Not at present," said Seymour.

"Decidedly not," answered a voice near them, which even Kate's incredulity was obliged to acknowledge as Frank's. "Why, Kate, how disbelieving you are! Come, shake hands with me."

And Kate in actual surprise beheld Frank Beresford standing by her side.

"Well, said she, with a slight blush, "who would have thought of seeing you? I did not hear you enter."

"I dare say not," replied Frank, "for as I met my mother on the stairs—you had not her expressive greeting to rouse you to a consciousness of my presence, and therefore the remissness of your welcome may be excused. Possibly your conversation with Mr. Glenallen was too interesting to allow you to remark any disturbance in the hall, or farther drawing-

room, though the doors of both apartments were open."

Kate's pretty dark eyes glanced up at Frank, with a look of curiosity, as he concluded his reply ; she felt as much astonished at a change of manner which she instantly perceived, even in the few words he then spoke, as at his sudden return. Not an atom of embarrassment was visible on his countenance or in his behaviour, and most heartily she congratulated herself upon the idea that his love for her (if he had had any) was quite extinguished. A minute after she said, as she walked back towards Edith—

" I thought you intended to remain away for some months."

" So I did," answered he, rather significantly — " so I did , when I parted with you ; time, however, does wonders—it changed my resolution."

And he turned aside to speak to Edith.

“ Frank,” said his mother, re-entering the room, “ you had better step down-stairs and take some refreshment. Hutchinson has placed the cold meat in the dining-room. But where is Mr. Ramsay ? is he come home with you ? I cannot find him.”

“ I should say not,” replied he, with a peculiar smile—“ he is staying at Newcastle ; we quarrelled on our way back, and parted.”

“ Quarrelled with Mr. Ramsay !” exclaimed Kate—“ Impossible.”

“ Quarrelled !” ejaculated Mrs. Beresford—“ parted, Frank—what about—what about ?”

“ About Kate, my dear mother,” whispered Frank in her ear, as in pursuance of her directions he left the apartment—“ now make what you can out of that.”

Mrs. Beresford looked mystified, till at last she determined within her own mind Frank must have made Mr. Ramsay acquainted with his intentions of proposing to Kate, and that the latter from his known dislike to women



having opposed them with more than his usual acrimony of temper, the master and pupil had in consequence parted. This she thought the most rational explanation of her son's words, over which, nevertheless, she did not know whether to rejoice or not, as although she respected Mr. Ramsay for his kind and unremitted attention to Frank during the many years he had been his tutor, she felt not very amicably disposed when she reflected on the prejudices he instilled into him regarding women, and so on the present occasion her mind remained equally balanced between a sense of regret and a feeling of delight. She imagined now the worthy old gentleman was gone, Frank would no longer demur about accepting Kate Bouverie for his wife; she never thought the latter could refuse her handsome and clever son!

Frank Beresford did not again honour the drawing party with his presence on that evening, and Kate had full time to reflect upon

what course of behaviour she should pursue towards him. She felt in a disagreeable dilemma, for she did not wish to remain where she was after what had taken place between them, as she thought her presence in his mother's house would seem a hint for Frank to leave it again; and she did not like the plan of continually residing with Cecil, from whom she had been separated for so many years, and whose ideas and habits were so perfectly different to her own.

These unpleasant reflections were, however, of short continuance, for a few words which she exchanged with Frank Bouverie on the following morning entirely dissipated them.

She happened to enter the breakfast-room rather sooner than usual on that occasion, never imagining to see any one there, for Mrs. Beresford was generally very late in rising, and her son she thought would not be up so early after his arrival on the previous night. But contrary to her expectations, as she glanced round the

apartment she saw Frank comfortably seated in a large arm-chair near the window, and upon hearing the rustle of her dress, he instantly turned round, and perceived her.

Now there is nothing so disagreeable to a woman of real feeling as to be alone for the first time with a gentleman whom she has refused ; and Kate felt this, and although she did not put much faith in the strength of Frank's affection for her, she was about to draw back to escape the awkward *tête à-tête* which she thought might possibly ensue, when he, laying down the book he held in his hand, said—

“ Come in, Kate—you are the very person I want to see. Where is my mother ? ”

“ Up-stairs—she is not down yet—it is only half-past nine. Mamma never finishes dressing till ten,” answered Kate, at once moving forwards to the table, and trying to throw off every trace of embarrassment from her countenance and manner.

“ That is all right,” rejoined he ; “ then

there is sufficient time to explain matters. Pray take a chair, Kate—I mean to have a long conversation with you.”

Kate obeyed his request, and wondered what he had to say to her.

Frank remained silent for a moment or two—thrust his fingers through his hair rather impatiently, and then addressing her with a half ironical smile—

“ I am afraid, Kate, you thought me a great fool when I proposed to you the other day,” said he—“ Come, own it, now—did you not ? You are silent ! Ah ! I imagined as much ; but then it was all a woman’s doing in the first place—all my wise mother’s ; she instigated me to the attempt. Well, every man makes a simpleton of himself once in his live ; I suppose I was one at that time : In fact, Kate, you were perfectly right in what you told me then ; I did not love you—not at all—and never could I fancy. You are not the sort of girl to fall in love with ; you have a strong mind, a pretty

face, a good temper, and there is the whole list of your attractions ; for you do not possess much feeling, Kate—not much feeling.”

Kate looked curiously at him.

“ I am greatly obliged to you for your kind compliments,” replied she, after a momentary pause, during which her vanity was slightly piqued by the coolness of his last assertions—“ But,” she added, with a merry laugh, “ I am heartily glad to see you have found out you do not love me.”

“ Yes, I thought you would be so,” rejoined he ; “ but allow me to proceed ; as I said before, you are not the sort of girl I could fall in love with—or indeed, many men either.”

“ Speak for yourself, Frank, not for others,” said Kate, gently colouring, yet with a good-natured smile ; “ do you know you are excessively impertinent ?”

“ Nonsense, Kate,” answered he, drawing his chair closer to her, and looking keenly up into her face ; “ there must be no ceremony

between us. I will allow you to tell me the catalogue of my faults, after I have recounted yours. Listen. You have dark, beautiful, hazel eyes, soft, curling, brown hair, a merry smile—in short, Kate, you are a good-looking girl, that is certain—still no one could ever love you—and I was nothing but a fool to think I did some time since.”

“Just so,” observed she. “I could have told you that even then; however, I do not see why others should not like me, Frank, though you cannot.”

“You have too much intellect, and too little feeling,” he replied; “you have none of the soft sentimentalism about you, which renders your sex so attractive.”

“Does it?” asked Kate, looking up enquiringly.

“To be sure,” answered Frank; “with the men it takes immensely. I know now that if I ever marry, I shall never choose a wife who

who could act or think for herself, like you, Kate, for instance—but a gentle, pretty, drooping little being who would always glance towards me for protection, with her liquid blue eyes, and golden hair, like a little angel upon earth, Kate.”

“ And what would you do with her when she became an old woman ?” said Kate, drily.

“ Ah !” rejoined Frank, “ there is the worst of it. I am afraid she would then prove rather a bore than otherwise—fainting fits and tears are not so pleasant in old women as in young.

“ No,” remarked Kate, “ I thought not. Perhaps I should be a pleasanter old woman, Frank, than your angel of a wife !”

“ Still,” said he, as if unwilling to give in to her, even on that point, “ still, self-dependance in a woman is a very disagreeable thing ; it makes the men feel as if they were nothing, whereas we like to think ourselves your pro-



tectors, to be, in fact, your all in all. I assure you, Kate, your character is not generally admired; you rely too much upon yourself; you have not sufficient timidity to please us, and I would advise you, Kate, to feign a little alarm when a dog or a mouse runs across your path—to turn those pretty hazel eyes of yours more fearfully for the protection of a gentleman in such cases—to let your musical voice falter a little when recovering from your fright—and you would take infinitely more, Kate—infinitely more:”

“No doubt I might,” returned she, with a flash of contempt in her bright eyes, “but what I am, I will remain—I am not going to play the hypocrite in that manner.”

“No?” rejoined Frank, eyeing her with a smiling look. “Well, I only tell you your apparent deficiency of feeling first showed me I could not love you. I thought to myself a woman like you, if her husband faltered from his duty in any severe trial of life, would again

urge him to it, tell him not to flinch from it, and scorn him if he did. Now this is not the sort of woman I admire—a soft, tender-hearted, loving little thing is the girl for me; one who would forgive me, and love me, and see my downfall or weakness without a murmur of complaint.”

Kate curled her lip in scorn.

“Let me imagine an impossibility,” said she. “Suppose me with my brother on a battle field—suppose him tempted to desert his post, and that a word of mine would induce him to keep it, even though I knew he would be shot dead at my side the very next moment, do you think the word should remain unspoken? No.”

“Exactly so,” rejoined Frank, “but do you call that affection?”

“Do I not?” Kate replied, “a stranger’s fate in a similar case would be indifferent to me, a stranger might go or stay; but a brother! he should die there, and I would die with him—I

would never ask him to fly death, if life brought dishonour."

"And supposing he did," said Frank, "you would despise him?"

"No, no," answered Kate, a soft light shining in her hazel eyes, "no, I should love him just the same, and never utter one word of reproach, for contempt depresses a man's spirit, and unfits it for those efforts, by which I would endeavour to make him eclipse that one stain of cowardice with a thousand acts of bravery."

Frank glanced admiringly at her, and well he might; for her beautiful face was glowing with animation and true feeling—a moment after he gravely shook his head, and said:

"You speak eloquently, Kate, yet not wisely; that is not the way to captivate the men, take my word for it; it might have done with the black broth gentlemen of ages past, certainly not with those of the present day. Latterly," continued he, "I have pictured to myself the

wife I intend to have—she is a very different girl to what you are, Kate. Well, it was a happy chance that you did not accept me, for we should have been very miserable together; you would have seen my faults too plainly, and I, as I said before, could not have borne that—no man could—we love to think ourselves the superior beings we are.”

“ You are !” exclaimed Kate, rather angrily, “ then you have taken up with your old opinions of us again, Frank ?”

“ No, no, not exactly,” answered he, “ I am much more indulgent towards the ladies than I used to be, much more pleased with their society. I think you did me some good in that respect—we mutually improved each other during those three months of study; but as to my being in love with you, why I see it is quite out of the question. You were right, quite right—I never felt any real affection for you, Kate.”

"So it seems," answered she, laughing merrily; then paused, and afterwards added: "You are very much changed, Frank."

"In manners?" rejoined he. "Yes! little Emily Mackenzie did that—the Mackenzies were a family I visited in Scotland, Kate. How roundly that girl took me to task! and yet in the pleasantest way possible; still I do not like her half so well as her sister Bessie. Imagine, Kate, a darling little creature with a face like Mrs. Bouverie's, light auburn hair, sparkling blue eyes, and the figure of a fairy, and then you have Bessie Mackenzie before you. If she will wait a year or two (and she can easily do that as she is quite young yet), I will have her...the pretty, soft, bewitching gypsy!—no, not gypsy, for her complexion is as white and as clear as alabaster—very different to yours, Kate."

"Comparisons are not always agreeable," Kate answered, "you had better leave any ob-

servations you intend to make upon my complexion for another time. I wonder when mamma will be down."

"Ah! my mother!" exclaimed Frank, as if recalled to himself, "I must explain matters before she disturbs us—Now, attend to me if you please, Kate. Let me see, it is full three months since I left the Square, is it not? Well, I had not been a fortnight away before I found out that I did not love you, and thought myself happy in having escaped an acceptance of my offer."

"Indeed, Frank," interrupted Kate, "you are extremely unpolite; I think I shall be offended with you very soon."

"No, you will not," answered he, "you are not a vain girl, Kate, so you will not be offended with my plain speaking. But where was I? ah!—I found out I did not love you, and I mingled in society, I was no woe-worn lover—I told you that I would never be one—

and at last I fell in love with Bessie Mackenzie. However, I determined not to propose so hastily a second time."

"And did you propose in the end?" said Kate, with a look of quiet curiosity.

Frank smiled.

"No, Kate, I thought I would not do so just then," he replied, "I determined to come home, and take a few lessons in the art of being agreeable from you, so that I might not stand the chance of a second refusal. I knew if I once made an open confession of this change in my sentiments, you would not object to my residing here for a month or so on the same footing as before—a brotherly and sisterly one was it not? You will have no ridiculous scruples in living with my mother during that short time, just because I made a mistake in fancying myself in love with you, will you, Kate?"

"Not I," rejoined she, laughing. "Do you



propose telling mamma of this pending engagement of yours?"

"No," he replied, "for, if I did, instead of quietly acquiescing in it she would endeavour to lecture me into marrying you, and matters would not then go on as comfortably as I wish them to do—as they did in past times."

"And Mr. Ramsay, is he coming back?" asked Kate, "have you really quarrelled with him?"

"Yes, about Bessie Mackenzie," answered Frank, "he railed at me for falling in love—I told him I intended to marry; whereupon he warned me I should repent it—Well, what were you going to say, Kate?"

"Nothing," returned she, who had made an effort to interrupt him, "nothing, I only wished to know whether you were acquainted with the news respecting Mrs. Bouverie and my uncle."

"Yes," answered Frank, looking rather

grave, " I heard of it for certain four months since—I guessed it from the moment I reflected on Ramsay's discomfiture, when he saw Sir Arthur and your sister-in-law. I knew the story of Amy Hillingdon perfectly well; in the first place from my mother—in the second from Ramsay himself. Amy Hillingdon was engaged to him when your uncle induced her to leave her home. She was much to blame; yet as far as I can understand, there were faults on both sides, for Ramsay's jealous disposition made her fear him—moreover she disliked the match altogether, as it was not of her own, but of her father's making. It was in that unfortunate affair Ramsay's dislike to your sex originated."

" I suppose mamma has told you everything," said Kate.

" She has," rejoined Frank, " and as far as I can see, your uncle's conduct was despicable, your brother's graceless. As for your

sister-in-law, I do not believe she had anything to do in the whole affair—do you not recollect her emotion upon hearing Ramsay's exclamations at her striking likeness to her mother?—She would not have acted in that manner had she been acquainted with her father's secret, because it was the very way to betray it. Cecil should have looked more thoroughly to the proofs of his wife's duplicity before he turned her out of doors."

"Turned her out of doors!" said Kate, a little shocked at Frank's mode of expressing himself, "he did not do that—she went with her father."

"She ought to have stayed with your brother," rejoined he, "what did she say to him?"

"Not much—only a few words professing her ignorance of everything; she seemed too grief-stricken at the discovery to say more."

"He did not believe her?"

“ No.”

“ And you—what did you say? You were there, Kate.”

“ Oh, I never thought she knew of the relationship existing between my uncle and herself—and I told Cecil so.”

“ That was right,” said Frank; “ a woman should always uphold another woman, when she can do so with a good conscience. I hate to hear them side against each other, as they sometimes do. Your uncle and cousin are on the Continent, are they not? But, hush! I hear my mother’s step; you know our compact, Kate; we are to go on as usual. Do not fear,” added he, with a smile—“ do not fear laughing and talking to me for the future—you will not revive any past hopes by so doing—I shall never love you better than I do at present.”

And moving towards the table, Kate and Frank sat down to breakfast as Mrs. Beresford entered the room.

There are many points in the characters of

our friends we can but partially understand—many utterly inexplicable ; thought Kate Bouverie, as she mused over Frank's avowed change of feeling and manner towards herself, and wondered how so vain a man could treat the matter thus lightly. But though she did not comprehend how this difference of sentiment had been effected, she was very well satisfied with its results, which seemed to be an increase of good-temper and agreeability on his part that pleasantly surprised her, and easily made her forgive his becoming so quickly consoled under his recent disappointment.

Kate was no flirt—Kate was not vain—Kate in short was a kind-hearted girl who never wished to wound other people's feelings for the sake of gratifying her own vanity ; and therefore when Frank came back to the Square in such excellent spirits, and confessed himself mistaken in his acknowledged affection for her, she felt delighted that he had found out his error, and being convinced by the careless in-

difference with which he invariably addressed her, and his professed admiration for Bessie Mackenzie, that there was no feint in the matter; she at once made him sensible she was disposed to forget the past occurrence, and be as they had been before a rather quarrelsome brother and sister.

Frank, however, did not care about forgetting it; but day after day talked of it, laughed at it, and made Kate do the same; listened to her observations upon the singular and pedantic manner in which he declared his affection, and finally made her the confidante of all his plans about Bessie Mackenzie.

His love for Bessie, nevertheless, puzzled Kate exceedingly; for when he spoke of her, he certainly did seem to like her very much, and his words often expressed more true feeling than she would have felt disposed to give him credit for, had she not heard him with her own ears; then at other times he appeared to forget her completely, and did not mention her

name for a week or two. Kate could not account for this ; it was a peculiar trait in the character of his affection which she had not noticed in that of any other other gentleman, and not being able to solve the mystery in another way, she laid it down to the singularity of his disposition.

And so a month passed ; no embarrassment existed between him and Kate, and each day the latter perceived a change for the better in Frank, for although he was still as devoted as ever to his studies, he became visibly less vain and reserved, and at times proved an agreeable acquisition to Mrs. Beresford's evening circles.



## CHAPTER II.

Clad in his terrors, and clad in his might ;  
Death laughs o'er the revel he holds to-night  
With his old foe Life he is running a race,  
Borne on in the flashing flames' wild embrace.  
He saw them afar and shouted with glee,  
' Here's a right merry night, good friends, for me !  
I'll speed with the wind, I'll away, away,  
The young and the lovely shall be my prey !

\*            +            \*            +            \*

Ha, ha, young lover, what dost thou here ?  
Thy cheek and thy brow are pale with fear :  
But thine eye is bright---wouldst thou war with my  
          might ?

Dost thou dream to save thy bride to-night ?  
She's mine, she's mine, and I hold her fast :  
Go to, thou madman, all hope is past.'

Le mérite des hommes a sa saison aussi bien que les fruits.

La nature fait le mérite, et la fortune le met en œuvre.

*Rochfoucauld.*

MRS. BERESFORD'S country residence was a neat stone house of the Elizabethian style, near Northampton. It stood some miles westward of the town, close upon a long, shady lane that turned out of the high-road, and was only separated from it by a row of tall trees, and a brick wall.

The building did not at first sight strike the beholder with pleasure, for it was a discoloured ill-shaped, rambling-looking affair; nevertheless, its internal arrangements were excellent, and the scenery of the grounds around it pleasantly diversified.

Mrs. Beresford and Kate were very fond of the place; but Frank disliked it, and scarcely ever visited there, averring the park to be in-

tolerably small, and the house damp—objections which his mother never thought of gain-saying, although she continued to retire thither at the close of every London season.

It went by the appellation of Althorpe Hall.

It was here then, unaccompanied by Frank, that Mrs. Beresford, Kate, and Edith L'Estrange arrived, about six weeks after his return to town; for being extremely methodical she would not have postponed her usual time of departure even for the sake of her son.

“How very provoking!” said Mrs. Beresford, as she entered the garden, and saw two or three workmen pass out through the gate, “how very provoking! the few alterations which I last week ordered to be made in the lower suite of rooms are not yet completed! Wright,” continued she, addressing one of the servants who was advancing to meet her, “Wright, how came this?”

“Why, ma’am,” replied the man, “Mr. Jefferson discharged three or four of his best

workmen the other day, and the fellows he sent in their stead were too ignorant to proceed very quickly about their work—but they’ve nearly done all now, and the house is neat and clean excepting in the room underneath Miss Bouverie’s, where you wished new window frames put up.”

“ Well,” rejoined his mistress, a flush of vexation colouring her good-natured countenance, “ I think you might have seen it sooner done. Edith, my love,” added she, turning towards Mrs. L’Estrange, “ Edith, I am sorry to bring you to such a house as this—it is so disagreeable to have workmen loitering about the grounds!”

“ My dear Mrs. Beresford,” rejoined Edith, “ everything is as pleasant-looking as possible !”

“ So it is,” cried Kate, “ notwithstanding the sight of the dusty jackets that are just now disappearing into the lane, But, mamma,” continued she, “ you say dinner will not be ready for some time, do you not? If so, I

shall take a walk to the wood, to pay it my evening welcome—now, do not expostulate—I shall be back in ten minutes; Edith, will you come with me?”

“Yes!” replied she, with a half smile. “I have not been here since—”

“Your marriage, my dear Edith.—that is what you were going to say, is it not?” interrupted Kate, as she saw her friend pause in some embarrassment. But come, we must have no saddening recollections—you are free again, Edith.”

And taking her companion's arm towards the little wood she had mentioned, and as she mounted a gentle eminence which stood on its outskirts, exclaimed:

“There, Edith, now look at the surrounding country—is it not beautiful? See the last crimson beams of the sun darting through the trees yonder! Edith, do you remember the fête champêtre that mamma gave here on my

sixteenth birth-day? you and I were merry-hearted children then!"

"I recollect it," replied Edith, in a quick, hurried manner, "I was married soon after."

"Ah, yes!" continued Kate, endeavouring to change the subject, as if sorry for having again directed her thoughts towards it, "and nearly at the same time Seymour was miraculously aided with money to prosecute his law-suit."

"True!" answered Edith, looking at a large dog which had closely followed them from the house, "what is this animal barking at, Kate?"

"I am sure I cannot tell," rejoined she, "Trusty, you are unpardonably noisy." Then turning once more towards Edith, she said: "I have tried in vain to guess who Seymour's mysterious friend could be."

"It is very cold, Kate," answered her com-

panion, "there is a keen wind rising—do not you feel it?"

"How chilly you are!" responded Kate, "come, it will not do for you to catch cold—let us return home then."

And directing their steps towards the house, Edith and Kate were soon at its entrance. The former walked straight into the hall, but the latter lingered beneath the portico, and looked again and again at the scene she was about to leave, turned once more towards the lawn, and in the wayward fancy of the moment began gathering some flowers. She had not, however, picked above two or three before a sudden growl from the dog, who still continued at her side, caused her to look up from the shrub she was robbing of its blossoms, and perceive at a short distance off the figure of a man advancing towards her. It was full dusk now, and she could not distinguish his features; fancying, however, it might be one of the out-door servants, she quieted the animal, and let the



stranger approach close to her. For a moment he stood in perfect silence, then taking off his hat, she knew him to be old Howitt, her uncle's valet.

"Why, Howitt!" exclaimed she, "how are you here?—I thought you were at the Castle."

"I quitted it directly my master left England, miss," answered he.

"And my uncle, where is he now?" asked Kate, hastily.

"In France," replied Howitt, looking anxiously at her, and listening eagerly to the tones of her voice.

"And have you seen him lately?" again demanded Kate.

"Last week, Miss Kate."

"And how are he and Mrs. Bouverie?"

"Well!" answered Howitt; then after a moment's pause, added: "He told me to seek you, miss, and to deliver this packet—quiet that dog, miss, or else we shall be interrupted

—he told me to deliver this packet into your hands.”

And the old man took a small paper parcel from underneath his cloak, and gave it to her.

“ I will go in, and read it directly,” said Kate, “ follow me, Howitt, you must stay here to-night.”

“ No, miss, not here,” answered he, “ I will not go to the servants’ hall, because my master’s story is in everybody’s mouth, and I do not want to hear him abused. I sleep in the village yonder—so if you have any answer to send to Sir Arthur I will call in the morning for it. It was to avoid speaking to any of the domestics that I accosted you in this strange way, Miss Kate.”

“ And have you been in Northamptonshire long?” asked she.

“ Only two or three hours, Miss. This morning I called in the Square, but finding you and Mrs. Beresford had already set off for this

place, I thought it best to follow you hither directly, as I could not stay long in England. I entered these grounds just now as some workmen were leaving them. I met none of the servants, and now good evening, Miss Bouverie."

And touching his hat, Howitt walked away, and Kate again directed her course towards the house.

That night Kate Bouverie sat up very late in her own room reading and musing over the packet she had received from her uncle. Its contents were only a bunch of keys, and a short letter addressed to herself in which he particularly described an escritoire at Bouverie Castle, and desired her to open it and burn all the papers contained therein, alleging that they related to his own private affairs, and in no ways to the property. Two or three phrases bore his thanks to Kate for the kind feelings he said he believed she still felt for him, and which she so generously displayed towards Amy; yet no

word of excuse was offered for his past conduct, not a hope expressed that they should meet again. But although the words of the letter were few and cold, well did his niece understand the proud yet humbled spirit which dictated them; she saw it had erred past its own forgiveness, and so never sought that of others. And much Kate pitied him—kindly her heart turned towards him, for though she despised the deed he had done, she could not despise him, as she looked back to his past conduct, and saw the bitter traces of repentance visible in every action she recalled to her memory. The lavishness with which he had supplied her wants and those of Cecil, the heavy gloom and depression of spirits he sometimes experienced, and the harsh, stern manners he then assumed, fully revealed the workings of remorse in Sir Arthur's conscience; and Kate forgave him all, forgave him even the efforts by which he united his daughter to Cecil; for she now believed it was

the fact of her brother having, in the first place, won Amy's affection that tempted him to do so.

On flew the hours and Kate Bouverie slept.

How unconsciously we all lay down to rest, and purpose to wake as unconcernedly in the morning! And yet danger is ever near us, during our whole life, by day and by night, Death everywhere follows our steps. A thousand chances may bring him to our pillows in many a different shape—still, still, however, the same pitiless destroyer! He comes in the mortal illness that seizes you in sleep, in the stroke of the murderer, in the lightning's flash, in the crimson flames of a sudden fire; he is no pleasant visitor! But we never think of this; we never think as we court the approach of sleep that that sleep may be our last, and we may wake to end our lives in agony and fear. Quietly, if not happily we seek our rest—and rest comes, and we lie helpless amidst the

many dangers that surround us—unconscious—it is well there is a Providence watching over us still !

Uninterruptedly awhile Kate Bouverie slumbered, and pleasant dreams flitted through her mind ; gradually, however, they became more troubled, and hurried scenes and fantastic shapes gathered vividly in her imagination. She fancied she was gazing on the bright blue sky, but suddenly that fair sky became dark, while its broad full sun grew red, and a thick, heavy vapour obscured its surface. Crowds of people appeared hastening in terror to gaze upon the lurid rays of light which yet lingered there, until all became black, and a sense of suffocation seemed to oppress her, then bursting out from the inky heavens, one intense flash of light apparently quivered over the scene, showed the multitudes around her horror-stricken and gasping for breath—and with a half-stifled shriek, Kate Bouverie awoke.

She looked around her, and she knew herself

to be awake and in her own room; yet to her great surprise dark misty clouds of smoke seemed circling there, she distinguished a strong smell of fire, and heard a loud crackling noise as if of burning wood. For a moment she imagined herself half dreaming; but in less than a minute her glance steadied, and more easily piercing the partial gloom of the apartment confirmed her in her first impression. Kate darted from her couch, sprang towards the door, and with terror and amazement, saw a bright red light gleaming through its crevices. Instantly opening it, she looked out upon the landing-place, when a large volume of smoke rushed in, and made her retreat, yet not before she perceived the whole of the staircase leading to her room in flames. And Kate knew not what to do, for she slept apart from the rest of the family, in a room situated at the back of the building, which had no communication with any other part of it, excepting by the staircase in question. Two apartments indeed were



on either side of hers, but they only led on to the same landing place as her own did, and thus were just as unsafe to remain in. She recollected this, knew there was no escape save by outward means, and hastily shutting the door, rung her bell loudly to arouse the other inmates of the house, whom she felt, by the quietness of the place, to be still insensible of the danger.

Ten minutes after as she stood in her room in an agony of fear and expectation, she glanced towards the window to see if there were some chance of safety for her that way; she saw none as yet, for upon that side of the Hall the ground on which it stood shelved sharply away, and thus, though her apartment was only upon the second floor, it would have been utter madness to attempt to spring from thence, as the leap downwards measured at least thirty feet.

Soon after she heard hurried footsteps overhead, then quick talking and shouting, first in the house, and afterwards in the garden, where

at last she distinguished the repeated utterance of her own name, and upon hastening to the window, discerned several of the domestics assembled there.

“Where is mamma?” she cried—“where is Mrs. L’Estrange? Can no one help me? The staircase is on fire! Is there not some method of escaping from this apartment? Is the house completely roused?”

“Yes, miss, yes,” cried one of the servants, “all are safe excepting you. Mistress is distracted, for she knows your danger. But we shall have the villagers here soon.”

“Pass into the rooms near you, Miss Kate,” cried another; “cannot you find some means of going round by the side staircase?”

“No, no,” answered she; “they all open upon the same landing place.”

“Good God! what will be done then?” exclaimed her questioner—“the apartment beneath her is in flames!”

“In flames?” echoed Kate, in accents of

terror, as she saw a large body of smoke ascending towards her windows from without—I thought the staircase alone was on fire—then indeed I am lost—what can I do?”

And she looked imploringly downwards for assistance.

The group below had thickened, for servant after servant joined it, and Mrs. Beresford and Edith L'Estrange were also there, gazing up at Kate, with looks and exclamations of mingled horror, consternation, and affection.

Vainly the few men-servants belonging to the Hall strove to allay the fury of the flames, that were rapidly consuming the staircase and the room underneath Kate's, in which latter place the fire seemed to have broken out.

For the most part of them ignorant men, under the absolute control of no one, their efforts, at once ill-directed and contradictory, were entirely useless, and impatiently they awaited the assistance of the villagers. Not being habituated also to scenes of the kind,

they were fearful of their own lives, and none of them dared to venture up the burning staircase to attempt the rescue of Kate Bouverie, notwithstanding all Mrs. Beresford's entreaties and promises of reward. They said it would be a useless waste of life; and so, indeed, it appeared likely to prove, for the whole inside of the ground floor on that side of the house seemed now one mass of fire.

Fast and furiously the flames mingling with a thick dark smoke mounted higher and higher, and bursting out from the windows below Kate's, flashed up in front of her apartment, excepting when a strong wind, which was then rising, for a second or two blew them aside, and partially made the black skeleton of the lower portion of the building stand out in strong relief against the brilliant light within it. Suddenly a deep red glow spread through the inside of Kate Bouverie's room, and they knew the fire was consuming the floor, they saw the bright flames spring upwards, called to her half wildly, and

again she came to the window nearly suffocating with the thick smoke that was circulating around her.

“Get ladders,” cried Mrs. Beresford, in an agony of tears and terror, “why have you been so long in trying to save her?—my darling Kate!—she will die—she will be burnt to death—oh! make some attempt to rescue her—and I will give you whatever you ask—whatever you ask—Get ladders.”

“We have none!” said one of the men, in accents of despair, “if we had had some we might have saved her long ago, but the carpenters left them all in the room where the fire originated—the room underneath Miss Bouverie’s—they are all burnt?”

“Burnt!” echoed Kate, who listened eagerly to his words as she leaned from the window, though her answer was scarcely audible from the roaring of the flames, “it is all over then. Mamma, mamma, I shall never see you again

—the floor is burning beneath my feet—is there no help from Heaven or from earth?”

“Spring from the window, Kate,” cried Edith, as she clasped her hands half in entreaty, half in prayer, “better be dashed to pieces than burnt to death—spring from the window, and God Almighty preserve you!”

“Not till the last, last moment for the love of Heaven!” cried a voice near them, which Mrs. Beresford knew to be her son’s, “the villagers will be here in another ten minutes—they bring ropes, ladders, everything that is necessary, and we shall find a safe method of escape.”

“Before then she will have perished,” said an old servant, “the floor will soon sink, Mr. Beresford.”

“Kate, Kate, my dear, dear Kate!” exclaimed Mrs. Beresford. “Oh God, what can be done? Frank, try to save her!”

Her son did not listen to her, he had advanced with another gentleman, whom Edith

knew to be Cecil Bouverie close beneath the window of Kate's apartment, where calling two or three men to them, they quickly asked and understood the nature and extent of the fire, and seemed to suggest some means of clearing the staircase.

"It is impossible, impossible," responded their listeners, "when the flames were first discovered we attempted that, but even then the lower part of it was burnt away—you would lose your lives, sirs, and could not save Miss Bouverie."

Frank stood for a moment in utter silence, looking up at the figure of Kate as she leant against the window frame, scarcely discernible as it was through the clouds of smoke enveloping her, and neither his mother nor Edith L'Estrange ever afterwards forgot the fearful expression of anguish which at that time passed slowly over his countenance. In another minute the latter was at his side speaking earnestly and rapidly.



“ Mr. Beresford,” she said, as if a sudden thought struck her, “ Mr. Beresford, there is one hope yet. I recollect that as I passed up the grand staircase yesterday evening, I saw a door which opened upon it nearly more than half way up, and I should think it might be easily gained were you to pass through the rooms of the first floor on the left side of the house—they are as yet, you see, untouched by the fire, and perhaps if all the upper portion of the staircase be not burnt, Kate may still be saved.”

“ No, no, Edith, that will never be,” cried Mrs. Beresford wringing her hands in bitter grief, “ the door was included in the alterations which were to be made last week in the house.”

“ Yes !” interrupted a footman, who stood near her, “ and I saw the carpenters begin to block it up only yesterday morning—there is no escape that way for Miss Kate.”

“ But there is, there is,” rejoined Edith,

earnestly, "I tell you I saw the door open at a late hour this very night; as I came down to supper I passed through it to go into the yellow drawing-room by a shorter cut—they must have left their work unfinished—it was open then."

Frank and Cecil looked eagerly at her, understood her fully, and determined to attempt rescuing Kate.

"Kate," said Cecil, as he saw his sister sink back from the window half stifled with the smoke, "do not give way now—we shall save you. Pass into the other room—every moment is precious—the flames have not yet penetrated there."

"Not yet?" murmured Kate, "they encircle it, Cecil—but I will do as you bid me. Still do not come hither after me—you cannot save me—Frank, Frank, stay where you are—all your efforts will be useless—three lives need not be lost for one!"

"Oh, Frank, do not let me lose you too," exclaimed Mrs. Beresford, who saw her son

preparing to enter the house, "and yet if there were a possibility of saving her!"

And she clung to his arm unwilling to let him go, unwilling to see Kate perish so cruelly before her eyes.

Frank shook his mother off, and accompanied by Cecil and three or four men, went round to the front of the house. Piling up some garden seats against the portico, in a few minutes they managed to reach its top, and throwing open the sash of a window, that was exactly over it, entered the building, thus attaining its first story, without even attempting to clear the lower part. Hastily they ran through several rooms, which led into each other, until they reached the door described by Edith, as communicating with the staircase. They tried the lock, and hurriedly opened it; but as they did so, a dense cloud of flame and smoke sent them back, and they as quickly shut it. They looked at each other for a moment, in perfect silence and utter dismay—then Frank spoke.

“It is but ten or twelve feet from hence, to the door of the apartment where Kate must now be,” he said, “the worst of the danger consists in the stairs not being able, perhaps, to bear the weight of a man. However, the walls of the staircase are yet entire, and if I cling to the iron balustrade, fastened against them, I may possibly reach the landing place in safety—at all events, I will make the trial.”

“It is certain death,” was Cecil’s reply, “but Kate is my sister, and it is for me to attempt it first.”

“Not so,” answered Frank, “I have the most chance of succeeding in saving her, and that is the point we must consider—I know the exact position of the rooms—you do not. You ought to stay here, and devise some other means of rescuing Kate, if you see me fail.”

And without waiting for another word, Frank Beresford, who was nearest the door, opened it

again, and laying his hand upon the railing he mentioned, disappeared amidst the flames and smoke.

Within the space of a few seconds, he entered the room into which Kate had retired from her own, and perceived her leaning against the wall, at a little distance from him, in speechless fear. The bright red flames were flashing through the apartment, and their whole blaze of light was reflected on her person. She did not at first see him, for her look was fixed upon a large body of fire, that seemed to be forcing itself up through the flooring, within a dozen paces of her. There she stood, her hand clasped upon the crimson cachemere shawl, which was thrown over the long white dressing-gown she wore; her dark brown hair floating far beyond her waist, in long and waving tresses of natural curl, the colour on her cheeks, the brilliancy of her large eyes, and the splendid hue of her outer covering, all enhanced by the magnificent,

yet terrible light, around her—she looked gloriously beautiful in the midst of her terror.

Without speaking one word, Frank advanced to her side, and as at last she perceived him, and uttered an exclamation of joy, he took her in his arms, and bore her towards the door. Blinded by the smoke and flame, he felt with one hand for the iron balustrade, even then almost glowing with heat, and taking it for his guide, soon found himself, he knew not how, in the corridor where he had left Cecil.

“There she is, Cecil,” said he, as he gave her into her brother’s arms—“Thank God! she is safe!”

And Kate, unable as yet to speak, looked towards Frank in wordless gratitude.

But there was no time just then to be lost in thanks, for the flames poured into the little passage where they were, and obliged them to hurry back towards the window, through which Frank and Cecil entered the house. A cry of joy from the groups in the garden greeted their appearance at it, and assistance having

now arrived from the village, a ladder was fixed up against the portico, and thus they were enabled to descend without the disagreeable necessity of perilling their limbs upon its sloping roof.

Mrs. Beresford, laughing and crying by turns, estatically embraced Kate, Frank, and finally Cecil in her delight, at the happy termination of their perilous enterprise—an infliction however which the latter did not seem at all to relish. Then as the ladies stood looking at the burning edifice, Frank at last remarked that his mother's appearance was rather a curious one, as her grey hair, having escaped from beneath the handkerchief, she had hastily tied round her head, floated in long meshes over her dark silk wrapper, and blew about with every breath of wind.

“ You cannot save the house by staying here, mother, he said; “ all this side of it at least will be burnt down. Go to the lodge—we shall have you laid up with the rheumatism.



Kate, tell her to go. Old Hickman will make up a fire there until Cecil has ordered one of the close carriages to be got ready to take you to Mrs Staunton's. She said she would receive you if you were in want of a shelter for the night. I must remain here to see how these fellows do their duty."

"Ay, ay," cried a spare old gentleman near them, as he directed a party of men to save some furniture in one of the rooms, which as yet was but partially consumed—"Go to my wife, Mrs. Beresford, pray—she knows all about the fire—your son was spending the evening with us when we discovered it—go to her—she will be very glad to see you."

"Very well, Mr. Staunton," answered Mrs. Beresford, without asking for any other explanation—"very well—I will. Come, Edith—come, Kate, my loves—we shall all catch cold I am afraid."

"But Frank and Cecil—they will do nothing rash, will they?" said Kate. "Every

one is safe now—make them promise that, mamma.”

Frank turned round.

“ I will give you that promise without much trouble, Kate,” said he. “ There was nothing worth saving in the old house but yourself.”

“ You will come to Mrs. Staunton’s, my dear, after the men have extinguished the fire ?” asked Mrs Beresford, as she prepared to leave the scene.

“ Of course,” replied Frank, rather impatiently, “ now mother walk on, you look like a Meg Merrilies or Madge Wildfire—go to the lodge, go to the lodge.”

And thither the ladies went, and from thence to their neighbour’s, Mrs. Staunton, who received them with every possible kindness, and explained to what chance they were indebted for the timely appearance of Frank and Cecil.

She said her husband, (who was a whimsical old gentleman, and knew every member of the Beresford family well) had accompanied them

all the way from London, and that when they arrived at Northampton instead of allowing them to proceed to the Hall, where he understood their coming would not be waited for, as it was unexpected, he made them both go on with him to his house to take the places of two other guests, who on that day had unfortunately disappointed him of their company. And so Frank and Cecil, to humour their old friend, agreed to this arrangement, and about nine o'clock the three gentlemen arrived there, passed the evening together, and sat up very late. Furthermore Mrs. Staunton informed them that it was one of her servants who first discovered the fire when they were all upon the point of retiring to rest, and Frank instantly knowing, from the direction of the light, that it proceeded from the Hall, at once set off towards it, while her husband walked to the village, and mustering all the hands he could to follow with assistance, at the same time sent on to Northampton for more.

“But what could have induced Cecil and Frank to visit this part of the country,” said Kate, “we did not expect them.”

“Ah!” replied Mrs. Staunton, “that you must ask them yourself, my dear Miss Bouverie. Will you not take some rest? continued she, addressing Mrs. Beresford, “cannot I prevail upon you to lie down on yonder sofa for an hour or so? or shall I show you back to the room you have left? Your son will scarcely be here before morning, I should say.”

Mrs. Beresford preferred remaining where she was, by the side of a large fire in a comfortable looking little study, and Kate and Edith likewise stayed with her. They endeavoured, nevertheless, to prevail upon their hostess to retire for her usual night's rest; but this she would not do, alleging as an excuse, that she did not think the house quite safe, nearly all the servants having gone with Mr. Staunton to the Hall, and that she was as

anxious as they were for the first news of the fire. So the four ladies watched together.

Wearily enough the hours passed; the two elderly ladies sat on either side of the fire-place, and Kate and Edith at a window which looked towards the part of the sky illumined by the distant conflagration, the former being wholly occupied with the thoughts of her happy deliverance from death, the latter as quiet and as sedate as usual. Gradually, however, the fiery light that was spread over the heavens grew fainter until at last only a pale tinge of red coloured them as the grey dawn appeared on the opposite side. Daylight came on—another hour passed, and Kate began to listen for the return of Mr. Staunton and his guests. She listened for many a long minute, till minutes grew into hours, and it was full seven o'clock before any sound on the road betokened their approach. At length she perceived Cecil and Mr. Staunton enter the house, and followed by Mrs. Beresford she ran down stairs to meet them.

“Where is Frank?” she exclaimed, as she saw he was not with them.”

“At the Hall—he will not be here for another hour,” said Cecil; then added, as he perceived an expression of anxiety settle on Mrs Beresford’s features, “but he is quite safe—he is directing the men in their labours.”

“And is any part of the old house standing?” asked Kate.

“Five or six rooms, [that is all!” replied Cecil.

“And are the flames totally extinct?—how and where did they originate?” demanded Mrs. Staunton.

“In the room below my sister’s,” answered Cecil, heeding only her last question. “The carpenters were working very late last night, and it is supposed that some of the shavings of wood they left there, were set on fire through their carelessness with the candles.”

“Now, ladies, let us pass on to the dining-

room," said Mr. Staunton, who had been impatiently listening to these interrogations. "You have blocked up the passage, so that we cannot possibly move forwards—come, step aside, Miss Bouverie, neither your brother or I, with our faces begrimed with smoke, are interesting figures to look at—step aside, there's a good girl—allow me to perform a slight ablution, before I give you the pleasure of my society."

Kate did as she was bid, and let the precise old man pass onwards, but arrested her brother as he was about to do the same.

"Tell me truly, Cecil," said she, anxiously, "mamma does not hear us now—has anything happened to Frank? is he hurt?"

"No, my dear Kate, no!" answered he, "do you think I should so comfortably come home to breakfast if he were? I assure you, unless it be for the few burns he received in rescuing you, he is quite unhurt."

"Ah!" rejoined she, "I cannot understand



how he saved me, I had lost every hope when he arrived to snatch me from the flames—it was a most perilous attempt, was it not?”

“Sufficiently so,” answered Cecil, “I thought we should all perish together. He went first, and I meant to follow if he did not return quickly. That was an agony of suspense, Kate, when I stood and counted the minutes till I saw him appear with you—I shall never forget it. He is a noble and generous-hearted fellow after all.”

“Yes, yes!” exclaimed Kate, musingly as she looked after her brother who now left her, and she felt half ashamed she had not found it out before.

Some time afterwards Kate desired Cecil to tell her how he and Frank so fortunately arrived at the Hall, and learnt that her brother, wishing her to spend a week or two with him at Bouverie Castle to arrange matters there, and aid him in selecting Sir Arthur’s private papers and property, in order to forward them to him,

called at Eaton Square for the purpose of asking her to accompany him thither directly because he did not want the business, disagreeable as it was, to be put off any longer, and that finding she had left town he followed her at once into Northamptonshire. He added he believed Frank bore him company in consequence of an invitation he had received to visit some friends of his in the neighbourhood.

And with this explanation Kate was satisfied, and at the utterance of her uncle's name, her thoughts becoming occupied with the commission he had entrusted her with, she mentioned it to Cecil, and said she would go with him to the Castle to fulfil it.

That evening, when Kate Bouverie offered her thanks to Frank for his exertions in her behalf, his reception of them perfectly disconcerted her pre-conceived idea of the manner in which he would do so. She had imagined he would listen to them with a mixture of reserve and self-commendation, and almost dreaded

that a peculiarly vain phrase would, for a moment, check the strong sense of gratitude she now felt towards him; but it was not so; for Frank, instead of enlarging upon the danger of the enterprise as she thought he would do, to her great astonishment, laughed the matter off, and made light of it.

“ I assure you, Kate,” said he, after listening to her for a minute or two. “ I assure you there is not much to thank me for—it was an easy rescue.”

“ No, no !” answered she, “ Cecil said it was not—I asked him all about it—besides I very well know myself that it could not be.”

“ Nonsense !” rejoined Frank. “ There, say no more, Kate.”

“ Say no more ?” answered Kate, “ I have not said much—words will not easily express my gratitude—yet, believe me, I feel your generous self-devotion deeply. Can I indeed do otherwise, when I reflect upon the perils I escaped ? Imagine yourself, Frank, standing

as I stood in the midst of the flames in yonder house, alive and well, yet knowing death was coming fast upon me—a terrible death! In the full possession of all my senses, I heard the voices of my brother, Edith, your own—bidding me hope!—for what?—for rescue? there was none, as I then thought—for a moment more of life. Ah! each succeeding moment brought a sharper pang of dread than its preceding one! Wild prayers came to my lips, I know not how—I saw the devouring element on all sides of the room, and seemed to count the seconds till it should close around me. I knew I should be conscious to the very last; for I did not feel my mind give way—I had the full horror of my fate before me—I felt if death came slowly or rapidly I should endure its worst pangs. At last there was a silence of utter despair amongst those without—a long, long silence—and then I heard that you and Cecil were attempting to rescue me. I believed the trial would prove a fruitless one—I thought you would both perish

as I imagined I was about to perish. Minute after minute passed, and the flames came nearer; through the crevices of the floor I saw the red glow of the furnace in the apartment beneath mine—a moment after its wild fires shot upwards through the burning boards—then, then, I perceived you at my side, and I felt myself saved. Frank, can you imagine the terrors of the scene I have described? the anguish I endured? guess then the almost delirious joy your appearance caused me—set no limits to the one feeling or the other, and after that you may perhaps have some idea of the gratitude with which I now tender you my thanks—I cannot express it—it is unspeakable.”

“Kate, Kate,” rejoined Frank, smiling, but with a deep flush of crimson on his brow, “you have said enough—you know not what you do.”

And he half turned away from her.

“I can never say too much on this subject,” she replied, “I would I could say more.”

“ You think too highly of a slight obligation,” returned he, “ yet, my dear Kate, if you choose to consider yourself in any way indebted to me—pray do. I shall not object to it I assure you—now and then it is very pleasant to have a pretty woman your creditor for civil speeches.”

Then, as if unwilling to hear more on the subject, Frank walked to the other end of the room, and immediately commencing a conversation with Mr. Staunton, left Kate to herself.

She looked after him as he walked away, while a secret feeling of pleasure came over her as she reflected that he had not given away to the slightest self-commendation in her presence, or even hinted at the dangers of his late achievement. Had he done so, I will not say, Kate Bouverie’s actual gratitude would have been lessened, but most certainly such a proceeding on his part must have told unpleasantly upon her feelings, for there is nothing more disagreeable than to have the sense of an obliga-

tion forced upon you by the person to whom you owe it. A man who performs a disinterested or courageous action, and thereby acquires a lasting claim upon the gratitude of another, should apparently forget it in the latter's presence, and never by word, look, or action recall it to his mind; as invariably, with a person of nice feelings, his continual recurrence to it will cancel the warmth of that gratitude which he would otherwise experience towards him. True, the obligation is intrinsically the same, and the debtor is not absolved from observing its just returns; but as before he was reminded of it by his benefactor, he acknowledged it with affection and tenderness, so does he ever afterwards recur to it as a matter of duty; for a man of a sensitive mind can never love a friend who has once had the meanness to make him pointedly feel the weight of his kindness. The tenderness which springs from a sense of gratitude is a frail and delicate thing, and if not carefully treated, short-lived.



The more delicate the obligation, the more delicate is that feeling; left to itself it increases in strength and depth; called to exert itself more fully by the very person towards whom it is directed, it is pained, distressed, and finally withers.

Glad was Kate Bouverie that no such feelings as these were excited in her mind by Frank Beresford's conduct in the present instance, for just then she liked him too well not to feel ashamed of any foolish thing he might say or do. She had, indeed, several times noticed that his vanity was considerably lessened since his return from Scotland, but never so strikingly as now, and reflecting with some surprise and curiosity upon this very visible alteration of character, her mind naturally recurred to the enchantress whom he said had effected it, and for the first time the name of Bessie Mackenzie struck her with a rather disagreeable sensation. Bessie Mackenzie! it was a pretty name she thought, and from Frank's account the lady

herself was beautiful and good, she supposed, and accomplished—and half an hour afterwards to her great astonishment, she found herself entirely occupied with thinking upon the said Bessie's perfections, instead of the escape she had experienced from the dangers of the past night.

## CHAPTER III.

“ Malheur aux cœurs ingrats, et nés pour les forfaits  
Que les douleurs d'autrui n'ont attendris jamais !”

ALZIRE VOLTAIRE.

“ How often is mankind prone to put an ill sense upon  
the actions of their neighbours, to take a survey of  
them in an evil position, and in an unhappy light ?”

WATTS.

IN about two or three days every arrangement  
was made for the removal of the Beresford  
family from Mr. Staunton's house; Cecil and

Kate proceeded at once to the Castle, Mrs. Beresford to Brighton, Edith to London, Frank alone remained in the country. Before Kate, however, left Northamptonshire, she once more saw old Howitt. He called to speak to her on the evening after the fire, which he said he knew nothing of until it was all over; he was then about to quit England, and Kate gave him a couple of letters for Sir Arthur and Amy. They contained the same protestations of affection she had partially expressed on parting with them, and offered in a manner easily understood yet delicately worded, a share of the fortune that was now hers.

There seemed something in the expression of Kate's countenance as she resigned the packet into the old man's care, which made him pause as he stood upon the threshold of the door, and a moment afterwards turning back, he came close to her, and fixing his eyes anxiously upon her face—

“ You, miss,” said he, you do not think so

badly of my master as Mr. Cecil does—do you?”

Kate gave him a slight look of surprise and displeasure, and did not answer; she shrank from speaking of her uncle to his servant, although she knew him to be a tried and confidential one.

Perhaps Howitt guessed what was passing in her mind, for soon after he added—

“You do not, Miss Kate, and you would speak gently of him, even now, did you not dislike to mention his misfortunes before a stranger—an inferior. But, miss, I know more of Sir Arthur, and Sir Arthur’s history than you do. He is to be pitied, though he has done a wrong thing.”

Kate looked up into the old man’s face, and the earnest and careworn expression of his features, drew from her lips, perhaps almost unconsciously to herself, the words—

“I do pity him.”

“Your compassion is not misplaced,” answered Howitt, “for were I to tell you all he has suffered, you would say, perhaps, that he had sufficiently expiated his fault. Never since he committed it has he known one moment’s peace of mind. I saw that. I know him well, for I have been nearly thirty years in his service. I was present at his marriage.”

“You, Howitt?” exclaimed Kate.

“Yes,” rejoined the old man—“I was always with him—I never left him.”

“Then you knew all,” said Kate; “the marriage—the marriage—the restrictions of the will, as well as my uncle?”

“I did, miss,” answered Howitt, mournfully.

“And you kept the secret?”

“I could not betray Sir Arthur—I could not,” replied he; “it was bad, it was not right I know, to do as I did, yet I had not the

heart to turn round upon the master who, when he and I were boys, saved me from starving, and ever since kept me in plenty and comfort. Besides, miss, I was not with him at his father's death, or else I would have threatened to tell, and done anything to keep him from denying his marriage. But I was away at my sister's in the north, and when I came back, there was no choice left me, except to say all, or be silent?"

There was a pause. Kate did not speak. and the old man continued—

"I loved my master. I could have borne to see him reduced to beggary by my means, not to dishonour—and I kept his secret. Years flew on. I thought he might come to some understanding with Mr. Cecil, when the latter grew to manhood, for I knew he soon wished to disembarrass himself of Sir Dudley's wealth—that it was torture to him to keep it, after the first few months of his enjoying it; and yet the bitter shame he would incur in



avowing he held it illegally sealed his lips, and he still continued to live a life of remorse. I lived that life with him, miss—we were both ill at ease and never happy. Constantly, however, of late years I endeavoured to make him confess all to your brother—but he would not. ‘My nephew,’ he once said to me, ‘is not what he was, Howitt; he might have forgiven me some time back, he will not now. No, the injustice must last during my life; the secret must die with me; it will all be his at my death.’ ”

Again Howitt paused, and then added—

“And after that, Miss Kate, when Mr. Cecil married Mrs. Bouverie, I strove to make her understand Sir Arthur was her father.”

“She did not then know he was so?” exclaimed Kate, eagerly.

“No, no, miss,” rejoined the old servant, “my master would never have suffered her to imagine that to be the case for worlds—he did not wish her to feel what he felt—the miseries

of an unquiet conscience. No, Miss Kate, she was perfectly ignorant of the whole affair."

"She was!" echoed Kate, half joyfully.

"But," continued Howitt, "I did not want her to remain so. I thought that if she knew of it, her remonstrances might have more effect upon Sir Arthur's mind than mine had; I imagined she could induce him to tell all to Mr. Cecil, and easily heal any difference between her husband and father. My efforts were vain ones; she never seemed to understand the hints I threw out respecting my master, and then she went away to Ireland."

"How did you contrive to speak to her upon the subject at all," asked Kate.

"Why," said the old man, "I only twice spoke to Mrs. Bouverie about it, and even then did not let her know who I was, for I managed to address her at dusk—once as she was returning from her evening walk on the sloping terrace of the castle, and again as she passed through the picture gallery. I spoke as plainly

as I could, without actually telling her the very facts; yet I know at present that she had not the slightest idea of what I meant. Perhaps it was a silly way to accost her; but somehow or other I did not exactly like to speak to her more openly, as I was only her father's servant. Poor young lady! hers is a miserable life of it now! Well, I did think Mr. Cecil was better hearted than that."

Kate turned from Howitt, and looked out at the window.

"I did think" continued he, "I did think Mr. Cecil would not let her go away into foreign lands with my master—even when I knew we were to sail, I hoped he would come and take her back, and leave Sir Arthur and I to go on by ourselves. Look you, miss, another person's fault ought not to be visited upon her head. Your brother was generous and kind when he was a boy; he is bitterly harsh now! And my master, my master, he is not so bad as some think him; had not Mr.

Cecil everything he wished for? were not his very whims complied with? He might have had nearly all the property for the asking, I am sure. He did like you both, miss, he did! But people will speak ill of him at present—they must do so. I am the only person who care about him, or who could contradict them, and they will not believe me—they know I am his old servant, they may think I am bribed; Miss Kate, do not believe that; it was not money kept me silent years ago—it was not money makes me speak of him as I do now.”

“I believe you,” said Kate, as she glanced at the eager yet sorrow-stricken countenance of the old man.

“Thank you, miss,” replied Howitt—“you are very good; you are not angry with me for the injustice I was an accomplice to, and I do think you would not even reproach Sir Arthur with it were you to see him. Well, there will come a time when we all shall want

forgiveness, and wish we had oftener forgiven others ; perhaps then your present kind feeling towards your uncle, towards me, will be a comfort to you. Good bye, miss; I have said all I wanted to say ; your forgiveness of the past I see written on your countenance—Mr. Cecil's it would be useless to ask for."

And carefully taking up the letters Kate had given him, Howitt left the house.

Kate Bouverie related all that had passed between herself and Howitt to her brother, hoping that by doing so she might make some favourable impression upon him with regard to Amy. But such was not the case; Cecil Bouverie smiled in utter contempt as his sister endeavoured to exonerate her from the designs of which he suspected her, and expressed his belief of Howitt's revelations being only part of another plan of his uncle's to effect a reconciliation between him and his daughter.

The next day Cecil and Kate set off for Wiltshire.

The sight of Bouverie Castle afforded no pleasant thoughts either to Kate or her brother, and it was in silence that they entered its venerable walls. For two or three days after executing her uncle's commission, Kate wandered about the building with a sort of vain restlessness, attendant on a mind ill at ease, thinking it duller than ever, and most heartily wishing to join Mrs. Beresford at Brighton.

The vivid recollections which were continually recurring to her memory of the past hours she had spent there, in the company of her uncle and cousin, and the more than usual gravity of Cecil's manner, damped her spirits, and at the end of the first week she could not forbear mentioning her wish to leave it. And to this her brother did not object; for after she had completed the arrangements he directed her to make

in the castle, he found her presence rather a restraint than a pleasure, and with no great reluctance did he acquiesce in her determination of returning to Mrs. Beresford.

This she accordingly did, and Cecil, meanwhile, remained in comparative seclusion in Wiltshire, for at times the recollection of past occurrences rendered him almost morose in temper, and when in such moods, he felt that the society of Lady Haviland would alone compensate for the many vexations his mixing in the world invariably entailed upon him. This inducement to do so, however, he could not then have, since her ladyship was at that time travelling on the Continent, in the company of her husband, whose health was declining, and therefore he determined to reside at the Castle, till actual weariness of the place should send him elsewhere for change.



## CHAPTER IV.

A lute still strung with thrilling chords,  
Whose sweetest voice is mute,  
A treasur'd casket's richest hoards  
Lost to a miser's suit.  
A bird of faint and wounded wing,  
That holds its painful flight  
Amongst the storm-clouds gathering  
Nor sees a ray of light.  
A winter sky without a beam  
To light its drear expanse,  
A dungeon where the daylight's gleam  
Meets not the straining glance—  
Such is the heart when hope is fled,  
When wan'd its gladsome ray,  
But rememb'ring though its joys are dead,  
The light that pass'd away !

It was one evening about four years after  
Amy's marriage, and two years after her sepa-

ration from her husband, that Mr. Stanhope sat in the pretty little parlour of Bloomfield Lodge, thinking deeply.

Candles and books were upon the table near which his chair was drawn, but he did not seem to heed them, and his eyes were carelessly bent on the moonlight lawn fronting the apartment, for it was a summer's night, and the shutters were as yet not closed. A soft refreshing air, laden with the perfumes of the garden flowers, entered the room through the half open window, and gently disturbed the thin, white muslin curtains, partially drawn before it.

The scene without was not a beautiful one ; but it seemed quiet and pretty, and the tall, dark trees skirting each side of the road that led past the Lodge, formed an agreeable contrast with the tender saplings, and fairy shrubs which decorated Mr. Stanhope's neat parterres.

It was not, however, on the tranquil scene before him that Mr. Stanhope's mind then

dwelt; his musings were not altogether so placid as that quiet landscape; for he was employed in canvassing a conversation he had just been holding with his son, who had on the previous day arrived at Wilverton for the express purpose of confiding to his father the sincere affection he now felt for Lady Eveline Huntley.

Time often works wonders, and did so in the present case; Herbert loved Eveline, and Eveline was no longer the childish and volatile being she used to be, either in the opinion of her lover, or that of others. Love had tamed her, as it has tamed many others, from the child into the woman, and taught her to become more quiet, more gentle than it seemed at first sight possible for her to appear.

In consequence of the liking the Earl of Mandeville had conceived for Herbert ever since his fortuitous assistance to his daughter in Piccadilly, and which he manifested towards him by continually asking him to his house,

Eveline and Herbert were much together, and the former easily perceiving with a woman's tact that her manners were at times displeasing to her admirer, eagerly tried to render them more to his taste. Now Herbert's taste in this particular, as well as in many others, was a good criterion to go by, and thus Eveline profited greatly by her endeavours to win his approval, and passed from a spoiled and thoughtless child into a pretty and interesting girl. But what she gained in attractiveness she lost in spirits, and her good-natured father was continually wondering why her happy laugh did not ring through the drawing-rooms as merrily as formerly, and why she loved to be alone and silent, and scarcely cared to speak to any one.

Eveline Huntley was now just eighteen, and the childish affection she formerly felt for Herbert had ripened into love. More and more she disliked the engagement which bound her to

Seymour, towards whom she did not feel any affection—yet she was afraid to mention her wish to break it off to her father, because, though very good-natured, he was extremely punctilious in fulfilling all matters of promise, and would not have suffered her to recede from it. She felt this, and kept her secret from him and from others, but not from Seymour or Herbert. The former resolved, as soon as he had an opportunity, to free her from her contract with him, the completion of which he continued to put off again and again on various pretences. The latter reading in the soft blue eyes of the prettiest face imaginable, an almost hopeless passion for himself, induced by pity, vanity, or what you will, returned it, and once in an unguarded moment confessed it to her. Lady Eveline at first only replied by tears and blushes, then told him how she stood with Seymour, and entreated him to think of her no more. This Herbert felt not at all inclined to do; he saw Seymour did not love her, he knew

he did, and his answer was that he would hope till the last moment, and then resign her quietly to his rival if she bade him do so. And gradually as he spoke of hope, Eveline also hoped, and they parted not utterly despairing, they were too young and sanguine to do that.

It was to tell the chief outlines of these circumstances to his father, to ask his advice upon them, that Herbert at the present time visited Wilverton, for the strong ties of filial affection between Mr. Stanhope and his son had scarcely lessened as the years flew on. He was the former's only child, and his every word and feeling were by him earnestly scrutinized and directed towards the right. Unpleasant enough, however, was the advice Herbert received; the vicar told him he had been faulty in visiting the Earl of Mandeville's house after the first moment he perceived Eveline's affections were directed towards himself, since he knew her to be engaged, more faulty still in avowing his love, and he desired him not to see her

again, as there was no probability of the Earl favouring his suit.

Herbert listened to his father attentively and patiently; but answered he could not yet utterly give up the hopes of winning Eveline, and reasoned persuasively enough upon the fact of Seymour Glenallen not loving her. Lastly he said he must see her once more, because he did not wish her to think any other considerations excepting those of duty could possibly induce him to relinquish her. Yet he also promised no endeavour of his should make her swerve from the filial obedience she owed to her father; that he would see her only to say farewell. And with this promise Mr. Stanhope was obliged to be content; he saw Herbert was inflexible on that one point, although deferring to his judgment on every other, and he had sufficient faith in his rectitude of principle to know he would keep his word with him, and see Eveline but to bid her adieu for ever.

The vicar then on the present evening sat



musings on the prospects of his son, a second time blighted by the waywardness of fate. He thought of one upon whom his first affections were placed, upon Amy, he grieved in spirit as well for her as for him that they had not been united, and lamented she had found a parent whose acknowledgement of her as a daughter, proved the direct source of the misery she was enduring. Gradually, too, his mind dwelt more earnestly upon her fate than Herbert's, for she was as dear to him as his son, and she was unhappier. Coupled as her name was with the deceit her father practised on Cecil Bouverie, he never believed her to be guilty of the duplicity imputed to her; he knew her too well to think so, and felt there was none more sincere in word, thought, and deed, than Amy. He had loved her as a daughter, he loved her still, and so distinctly was his opinion of her real worth pronounced, whenever she was mentioned before him, that no one dared to utter any reflection upon her in his presence, though a

great many of his neighbours and acquaintances seemed inclined to do so; for when is envy ever silent over the unfortunate? Not a line had he received from her since she left her husband's house, by rumour alone was Sir Arthur's history known to him, and although he attributed this omission on her part to a sense of shame at the accusations preferred against her, and a fear of his taking the harsh view of her conduct which other people did, he felt hurt at it; he expected a firmer reliance in his affection from the child he had cherished as his own.

“ And this, this is the fate of that young being whom I saved from a premature death !” thought Mr. Stanhope, as he gazed out upon the very gate where he had taken Amy from the arms of the corpse. “ Severed from those she loves best, she lingers by the side of one who all his life must drink the bitter draught of remorse, as well for the misery he has brought upon his child as upon himself. I see no better

hopes for her on earth—and life is long—God ! give her strength to patiently endure unto the end.

And the vicar covering his eyes with his hand, as that prayer rose to his lips, for one moment shut out the moonlight scene from his sight ; that moment passed, again he looked up, and saw with surprise a lady closely veiled step through the open window, a few seconds stand irresolute, then advancing towards him, lean against the table as if for support, and tremblingly utter—

“ Mr. Stanhope, father ! ”

The vicar rose from his chair.

“ Amy, is it you ? ” he exclaimed.

“ Father, father ! ” Amy cried as uncovering her face she fell at his feet, and covered his hand with her kisses and her tears.

And for some moments neither spoke again ; Amy remained speechless with emotion, and so did Mr. Stanhope. The latter looked almost in doubt at the pale, thin figure before

him, and asked himself if indeed that could be the young girl who left his roof four years since, brilliant with loveliness and health; he could scarcely recognize her now, save for the voice whose every tone he remembered. Even when her bonnet and shawl were thrown aside, and the graceful head and long golden curls were uncovered, still she seemed not the Amy of former years. She was yet beautiful; the exquisite modelling of her features would not allow her to be otherwise; but the fair, transparent complexion, the redness of the delicately turned lip, the colouring of the cheek had faded and she was pale, deathly pale, alone of all her former self, the large dark eyes appeared replete with their usual brilliancy and beauty.

“Amy,” at last said Mr. Stanhope, almost unconsciously as he lifted his eyes from her face; “Amy, my poor child, you have suffered much.”

She rose from her half kneeling posture, she seemed to listen to the compassionate tones of

his voice, and to repress her tears, then said—

“ And you love me still, father ?”

The only reply the vicar made was to press her hand kindly within his own.

“ You never believed,” continued she, falteringly, “ you never believed all that they said of me ?”

“ Never !” replied Mr. Stanhope.

“ You did not ?” she said, with one bright glance of gratitude, spreading over her faded features, “ and I forbore to write to you because I thought you did !”

“ I guessed so,” answered the vicar ; “ but, Amy, I thought you knew me better than to suppose I could easily think you were guilty of such deceit.”

“ The proofs appeared so strong against me,” murmured Amy.

“ I did not believe them !” rejoined he, then added more gently, more kindly—“ You are come at last, Amy, you ought to have found your way hither sooner.”

“ I could not,” she replied, “ I have been abroad, in Italy.”

“ With your father ?” asked Mr. Stanhope.

“ Yes !” answered Amy, and she bent her glance upon the floor.

“ And where is he now ? you have not left him ?” said he, enquiringly.

“ Left him ?” repeated Amy, lifting up her dark eyes half reproachfully to the vicar’s face. “ He is here, in the village ; only he would not come on with me. I,” she continued, “ I could not pass though Wilverton, and forbear to see you,—do not deem me ungrateful for past kindness, father, shame-stricken as I felt when I left England I could not write to you.”

The vicar drew her towards him, looked into her countenance one moment with an earnest, enquiring look, then kindly, and almost in a whisper, said—

“ Amy, and he, your husband, tell me about him ?”

She could not well become paler, but an a’

most livid hue spread over her countenance, and she trembled very much, as she answered in the same low tones.

“ I cannot speak of him—not now at least—another time I will.”

“ You do not stay long here?” asked Mr. Stanhope.

“ No!” she replied, “ I and my father are going to town, to Richmond; he has a house there, and he intends to reside in it for a few months, we only stop the night at Wilverton.”

“ Then we may not soon meet again, Amy?” said the vicar.

Amy was silent.

“ We may not soon meet again,” continued he, “ and I shall never hear, perhaps, the truths I wish to know; not through a vain curiosity, Amy, you must well feel that. It is better I should have the recital of past events from your own lips—I may see hope, where you see none; on the dark path, which Providence has marked out for you, I may find a ray of



light undiscernable by you, or at least strengthen you to tread its weary way patiently, my child. Tell me all—I am no stranger, have I not watched over you in infancy? what would I not give to watch over you now!—to have you near me, as in years gone by, with your sunny smile, and happy countenance! Amy, do not withdraw the confidence you once had in me—a daughter would tell me all, do you the same?”

“ I will, I will,” replied Amy, weeping, and leaning against the vicar’s chair, she related everything that had passed between Cecil, her father, and herself, since the first beginning of their unhappy differences. She did not conceal her own faults, she saw she had erred as well as her husband, and clearly enough her narrative pointed them out. One thing alone she still kept secret from the vicar, and that was Cecil’s accusation of her having loved Herbert at the time of her marriage with him, all else was plainly told, though with many a painful effort at self-command.

Mr. Stanhope pitied her, he perceived how strongly she must have felt Cecil's cold and unkind treatment, and in the first place bitterly resented his love for Lady Haviland; a few gentle words of reproof fell from his lips; but they were very few, for he saw she censured herself more severely than he could have done, and he was not one to break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax. Yet eager as he was to discern any possible hope of a reconciliation between her and her husband, he saw none; had Cecil been a passionate, irritable man, he would sooner have trusted in its probability; as he knew him for what he was, both proud and cold-hearted, he did not dare hope for it.

But when he looked upon the young heart-broken girl before him, his lips involuntarily spoke of brighter hours in the future, he feared to think that the long, long years of life were one and all to darken her fair, pale brow with deeper misery, or bow the suffering spirit yet lower beneath the still increasing burden of

woe; he felt time would not assuage a grief like hers—and he bid her hope.

She listened to his words, she lifted her eyes to his face with one wearied yet earnest look, then bowed her head and said—

“I do not hope—there is no hope for me!”

“Amy, child,” said Mr. Stanhope, kindly, as he read that quiet glance of despair in its full meaning, “this is not well—we know not what is reserved for us in the future; happiness may yet be in store for you—the wise decrees of Providence are ever merciful in the r end, though they at first sight seem harsh to us.”

“I do not repine at them,” replied Amy—  
“I have not uttered one word of complaint against the will of Heaven; you taught me not to do so. The passionate spirit of former years has passed away, father; I am no longer what I was. Yet I feel no hope of better

days to come ; I cannot but despair—the grave is all I wish for.”

“ And your father ? would you leave him alone ?” said Mr. Stanhope.

“ No, no,” cried Amy, as she crept closer to the vicar—“ it is for him I live ; I only wish that we could both die. He cares not to live but for me, and I for him. Father, you who are so merciful towards every one, think gently of him ; he is not all they say he is—he is good and kind to me ; he would have been so to others, save for the error of his early life, that taught him harshness and bitterness towards a world which he knew would despise him when it was once discovered. Father, he has felt remorse—he would give all to redeem the past ; it was not until he knew I loved Cecil that he forced him to marry me—do not judge him harshly like others ; they know him not ; he is kind, he is good now—and he is unhappy !”

Pityingly Mr. Stanhope gazed on Amy's pleading countenance, and answered—

“I do not, I will not, for your sake.”

There was a slight pause, then Amy continued :

“He told me,” said she, “to bear his thanks to you for your past goodness to me—he told me to say his gratitude was inexpressible—that, father, father, knowing from what a childhood of misery you saved me, you must feel how deeply he thanks you for the charity which induced you to do so. He wished me even now to visit you on purpose to tell you this, and all, all that I could say, he said, would never sufficiently express his gratitude towards you; he would have come himself, but he could not do that, father, he shrank from it.”

The vicar listened to her in silence; and when he at length spoke he seemed not to have been thinking so much of Sir Arthur as of his nephew, for he said—

“ And your husband, Amy—where is he now ?”

“ I do not know,” she answered, in a quick faltering voice—“ I have not heard of him since I left England.”

“ Not once ?” said Mr. Stanhope ; “ has he then left you entirely dependent on your father ?”

“ He did not wish me to be so,” she replied ; “ he offered us both a large share of the fortune he enjoys, but we would not accept of it.”

Mr. Stanhope mused again ; Cecil, he thought, was not mean-spirited, or ungenerous in that respect, it was not so much his former deprivation of the property which angered him against Amy, as her apparent deceit, practised as it seemed to be from mercenary motives, and he suddenly hoped that at some future time her innocence would become apparent, through the long-suffering patience

with which she bore the penurious life she and Sir Arthur had devoted themselves to.

He did not know how strongly Cecil was imbued with the idea of Amy having loved his son, or how unfortunately circumstances had combined to support it with apparent proof, and he was about to express this opinion in words when, ere he could do so, Herbert entered the room.

He had just returned from a walk, through the village, on which he set out directly after his conversation with his father about Eveline, in a very lover-like and irritable mood, and was yet enveloped in his cloak and hat when he came into the apartment. Amy did not recognise him immediately, and thinking he was a visitor, hastily placed her bonnet on her head, and while he stood looking at her in lost astonishment, stepped by Mr. Stanhope, and passed into the garden through the window. Herbert Stanhope gazed after her for a mo-



ment, then walked forwards to the table, and uttered the single word—

“ Amy !”

“ Yes,” answered Mr. Stanhope, “ it is.”

And a minute afterwards his son was at the garden gate by her side.

Herbert Stanhope's love for Amy had worn away beneath the happier influence of Eveline's; still, however, he felt that peculiar regard and affection for her which a man ever feels towards a woman he has sincerely though unfortunately loved, and his first greeting was hasty and embarrassed.

By the silvery moonlight he looked upon the beautiful girl he had once loved so well, and saw her changed into the pale and careworn woman; there was grief on her brow, tears in her eyes, and his heart beat rapidly and tenderly at the sight. She held out her hand to him, and he took it; his own trembled as he held it; and while the hours of his boyhood, the bright,

bright hopes of past years, and the anxious and jealous fears, too, of his later days, came back in one wild rush of thought and feeling to his heart, he bore it to his lips, and some hot tears fell upon it. He knew her heart-broken—forgotten by the husband she loved—clinging with fond affection to the father who brought all this misery upon her, and his voice faltered as he called her by her name.

And Amy looked up as little able to speak as himself; she saw the sad expression of his face, felt his tears upon his hand, yet even then she did not dream he had loved her; she thought it was only the affection of their childhoods days which caused him this emotion.

“ You are very good, very kind !” she at last said, “ I did not know you just now, or else I would not have shunned you, Herbert.”

“ No, no,” he answered, “ I thought you would not, Amy, dear Amy.”

And there was a silence, neither liked to

speaking of other days or of the present time, and both for the moment felt it a relief when Mr. Stanhope, who followed his son on to the lawn, stood beside them.

“Amy,” he said, “you had better come in, the night is a chilly one, come in for awhile.”

“I cannot,” she rejoined, “it is near ten o’clock, and I promised my father to be with him at a little past nine, I must leave you directly, I must indeed.”

“Then we will walk on with you,” said Mr. Stanhope, “you must not go through the village by yourself, at this late hour.”

And stepping back to the Lodge, he fetched his hat, then offering Amy his arm they all three passed out into the quiet moonlight lane. Silently enough they proceeded towards Wilverton, a few commonplace observations that Mr. Stanhope made were now and then answered by Amy and Herbert, but neither spoke much, for each felt the other’s presence a restraint. Herbert, who had never told his hopeless love for

Amy, to his father, feared to speak of the past or the future lest he should betray it, while still feeling the agitation that the unexpected sight of Amy caused him; and the vicar could not touch upon the revelations, which Amy so lately made him, before his son. They walked on then for the most part in silence, listening to the quick sighs of the breeze, as they swept lingeringly by, and listlessly looking at the tranquil landscape around them.

"I hear a carriage coming," at last said Mr. Stanhope, "Herbert, step behind us, the lane is too narrow to allow you to stay where you are when it passes."

"It is not a carriage," replied his son, carelessly, and still preserving his place by Amy's side, "it is a party of horsemen."

"But there is a carriage too," observed Amy, turning round towards the spot whence the noise proceeded.

And there was—for a pretty little phaeton drawn by a pair of jet black ponies, whose silver

harness sparkled gently in the moonlight, came slowly towards them. Two ladies sat within it, one of them a handsome looking woman dressed in widow's weeds held the reins, and appeared talking to a horseman who rode near the carriage, the other was leaning back, and appeared more asleep than awake. A girlish figure on a grey horse, accompanied by another gentleman, followed close behind them.

At length the pace of the graceful little animals attached to the phæton slackened into a complete walk, as they began to ascend the hill, on the summit of which Amy, Mr. Stanhope, and Herbert were walking towards the village, and their conversation could be distinctly heard by the vicar and his companions.

“*En avant, en avant,*” cried a lady's voice, “*ma chere miladi, je m'endors,* why are the spiteful little creatures idling their time in this manner—*nous n'arriverons jamais chez nous.*”

“Patience,” answered a voice which Amy knew but too well—it was Lady Haviland's—

“Patience, *mon amie*, surely you would not have Zémire and Azov gallop up the hill?”

“I would have them do anything that would make us arrive home the sooner, come, touch them up, *je m’ennuie à la mort*.”

And on came the little cavalcade at a full trot, while Mr. Stanhope drew Amy aside to let it pass. Having never seen Lady Haviland he could not guess the thoughts which occupied Amy’s mind at the present moment, and was, therefore, surprised when he felt her hold him to the spot where they stood by a sudden and involuntary pressure of her hand upon his arm. His look was directed, like hers, towards the beautiful widow, seated within the carriage, and he continued gazing at her a moment after Amy had turned her eyes away.

Suddenly the horseman nearest to their side of the road, reined in his horse, leaned forward, seemed to take a rapid survey of them, and passed on.

“It was my husband!” exclaimed Amy, almost wildly, as loosing her arm from Mr. Stanhope’s she sprang forward a few steps, and looked after him, “for the love of Heaven speak to me, Cecil!”

But he did not heed her, horse and rider were fast disappearing in the distant scenery, and her own words alone seemed to echo round her. A moment after the young lady who followed Lady Haviland’s carriage on horseback rode up to her, bent eagerly forward, and laying her hand on her shoulder, cried half joyfully—

“Dear, darling Mrs. Bouverie, is that you?”

There was no mistaking the pretty face with its long light ringlets now so close to her own, and Amy though still bewildered with the emotion she experienced at the sight of her husband, recognised Lady Eveline Huntley.

“Papa, papa, wait for me, I will be with



you in five minutes," cried her ladyship to the gentleman who was closely following her, "wait for me."

"I am waiting, Evy," answered the Earl, guiding his horse up to the side of hers, "who are you talking to?"

His daughter whispered a few words in his ear, and in another minute the old gentleman rode on, looking rather unpleasantly surprised.

"Now, let me come and see you, Mrs. Bouverie," said Eveline, as soon as she saw her father at about five or six yards distance, "only inform me where you are, I cannot say anything to you to-night; but I will tell Kate I have met you, and she will be so glad, and I will let Captain Stanhope hear of it, too."

"No, no, dearest Lady Eveline, tell no one of this meeting," returned Amy, endeavouring to collect her scattered thoughts, in order to give her a reply, "do not say anything about it to Miss Bouverie, as for Herbert and Mr. Stanhope, they know I am here."

“Do they indeed? And have you seen Herbert?—Captain Stanhope, I mean?” asked Eveline.

“He is with me at present,” said Amy, pointing to Herbert, who now appeared at her Ladyship’s side, accompanied by his father.

Eveline coloured deeply as she was introduced to Mr. Stanhope by his son, and for a moment seemed quite incapable of speaking either to one or the other; till hearing the Earl calling to her to ride on, she at last turned to the vicar and said, in blushing confusion—

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Stanhope, I am so surprised at meeting Mrs. Bouverie that, that I do not think I have spoken to you, and, and,” she continued, attempting to laugh, “I really do not know what I am saying or doing.”

The vicar smiled kindly as he answered her, for he guessed the cause of her embarrassment, and could not help admiring the pretty, childish creature before him, then taking Amy

again under his arm, he made a sign for his son, who was now speaking eagerly to Eveline, to let her move on. Herbert certainly obeyed him—rather willingly too, for he himself took her reins, and walking by her side, led the horse forwards.

“But once again?” asked Eveline, in a quick, hurried voice—“but once! there is no hope for us, then!”

“I will not despair,” said Herbert in reply.

“It is a hard matter not to, Herbert,” said Eveline sadly; “I told papa, three days ago I could not love Seymour, and that I did not wish to marry him; but he called me a silly child, and said I must. However, I have six months’ reprieve as yet,” added she, more cheerfully, “and I will hope as you do—Seymour has put off the marriage again.”

“He does not love you, Eveline,” answered Herbert; “and were it not that your father

so angrily objects to our union, I would not thus quietly resign you. Still perhaps we may be happy even yet; hope sometimes whispers you will be mine."

"Would that I were!" answered Eveline; "but Herbert—dear Herbert, farewell—here is my father—see me once again, oh, see me once again?"

"I will, I will," replied he; and turning back, as he saw her join the Earl, he retraced his way towards Amy and his father.

They were now close upon Wilverton, and the attention of both the vicar and his son was entirely diverted from Eveline towards Amy.

Standing before the brilliantly lighted front of the village inn, Amy turned round to bid them farewell.

"You leave to-morrow, Amy?" said Mr. Stanhope—"early or late?"

"Early," replied Amy.

“ And when shall I see you again ? ”

“ I cannot tell,” she replied ; “ my movements depend entirely upon the will of my father. But never, never think I can forget you—and write to me sometimes, promise me that ? Do not speak kindly to me now,” she continued, more hurriedly, “ because I feel I shall give way to a childish grief, if one word of kindness is spoken, and I do not wish him to see me in tears—I do not wish these people to guess who I am, at least till I am gone. They do not know us, we were careful of that ; think of me sometimes, Herbert, father ! ”

And drawing her thick veil over her face she entered the inn, as she saw two or three of the villagers approaching.

“ That was Mr. Bouverie, then, who passed us ? ” said Herbert, to the vicar, as they walked home together.

“ Yes,” replied Mr. Stanhope, and Herbert said no more. His feelings of anger and in

dignation against Cecil were just then too bitter to be expressed before his father, and rather than not speak them in their full force, he chose to be altogether silent. Gradually, however, his mind wandered from Amy to Lady Eveline, and pleasanter feelings and ideas possessed him.

The vicar, meanwhile, remained occupied with his own thoughts, and did not seem more inclined for conversation than his son. He was reflecting upon the keen, eager look of animosity with which Cecil recognised his wife, and that alighting first of all on her, was afterwards bent upon himself and Herbert. He was thinking of the wild exclamation of mingled surprise, grief, and joy, which burst from Amy's lips as she saw him, and his heartlessness in hearing it, and then passing on without directing one word or look towards her. And he at length knew Cecil's utter callousness of feeling for Amy, and felt there was little chance of a

reconciliation between them. Yet still he strove to hope against hope, and thought within himself that the patient endurance with which Amy now bore the trials she was passing through must in the end be rewarded, and the love her husband had hitherto repulsed so coldly, would at last find a home in his heart.

Many a day afterwards did Mr. Stanhope grieve over the fate of her who was to him as a daughter, and have her pale, earnest face present to his imagination. And it was the same with his son; though he loved Eveline sincerely, still the remembrance of Amy haunted his memory, and pained the heart which once was wholly hers.



## CHAPTER V.

If love on earth be doom'd to perish,  
If all the hopes our young hearts cherish,  
    Fall 'neath the blight  
Of care and time as years fly o'er us,  
Why cling unto the life before us ?  
    Or dread death's night ?

A smile the cheek should ever borrow,  
I would not love if love be sorrow,—  
    Which so it seems,—  
For I have seen the young cheek fading,  
A cloud of care the fair brow shading  
    Beneath love's dreams.

If we could love with joy and laughter,  
Nor feel a pang of pain come after,  
    Why then I'd say  
That love is good, and true, and smiling,  
And bend me to its power beguiling,  
    Nor fear its sway !

But where the cheek must lose its roses,  
The heart alone in death reposes,  
I do not see,  
That such a dark and dreary passion,  
Though, since the world began, in fashion,  
Can pleasure be !

Prosperity doth best discover vice ; but adversity  
doth best discover virtue.

BACON.

And what is faith, love, virtue, unassay'd  
Alone, without exterior help sustain'd ?

MILTON.

ON the banks of the Thames, near Richmond,  
there is a small white house facing the river,  
and encircled by a pretty looking flower garden,  
passably well arranged, and filled with growth.  
A smooth but narrow lawn spreads its fresh  
carpet of verdure down to the very edge of  
the sparkling water, and its even surface is only

interrupted by two old oaken seats placed on one side of it. Yet pleasant as the situation of the building is, it has a dull look from the discoloured appearance of the walls, and the few windows which are seen through the dark foliage of three or four large trees, that stand close to it, and stretch their branches across its front. You can only count nine as you glance up at the house; three on the ground floor, three on the first, and three on the third and last. No, certainly it is not a pretty looking house, for a disagreeable gloom hangs over it from the shade of those old trees, which I would rather not see there.

Some years ago this building belonged to Sir Arthur Bouverie, who settled in it soon after his return from the Continent mentioned in the last chapter, because it had been untenanted for several months, and his income being then very limited he did not wish to seek another house while one of his own was vacant, and thus lose a double sum of money. Besides it

suited him well enough, as its situation was quiet and agreeable, and his circumstances would not admit of a better. True, the rooms indeed were few and small, their furniture worn and faded, but Sir Arthur and his daughter had lived in poorer dwelling places than the one in which they were now about to reside, and neither murmured when they found themselves within its walls.

And there on many a summer's morning when the river was not yet disturbed by the bustle of the steamer or the boat, Amy trod the green bank that sloped down towards the river, sometimes with a book in her hand, and at others idly musing as she looked at the flowing stream at her feet. Again when the moon was high in the heavens, and a holier, calmer stillness spread over the scene, she often stood glancing up at the bright stars above her head thinking of the past—grieving over it, and grieving over the future, while the beautiful moonlight streamed down upon her fair, pale features,

shone on her brilliant hair, and lit up her large, dark, spiritual eyes—most beautiful moonlight ! how exquisitely lovely do the lovely seem, when seen in thy pure silvery radiance !

Sometimes, also, the French windows which opened from the house on to the lawn were unhasped to admit the evening breeze, and through the half drawn crimson curtains her gentle voice was heard singing some low, soft songs, in unison with the scene without. Hers was no longer the beautiful yet uncultivated voice of former days, for during the two years she spent in Italy, to please her father, who was passionately fond of music, and in some degree to occupy her time, she took lessons in that accomplishment and rapidly profited by them. No wiry or feeble notes broke the melodious music her lips were now accustomed to utter, one and all were mellowed down to an excelling sweetness of intonation. She sang expressively, too, as if her very soul were breathing in the strains she poured forth.

It was well Amy did so cultivate the fine voice Nature had given her, as necessity soon obliged her to seek its aid in order to procure the commonplace comforts of life; for Sir Arthur's present income, which was derived from a small sum of money in the funds, left him by his mother, and from five or six houses near Richmond, barely sufficed for the wants of his daughter and himself. In the earlier stages of their change of fortune, neither Amy nor Sir Arthur, accustomed as they had been to a careless and extravagant mode of living, knew the value of the money they still called their own, and though they endeavoured to live as reasonably as they could, they still found themselves expending more than they ought to have done, and finally were obliged to draw upon the principal. This they did more than once or twice, thereby considerably straitening their circumstances, and it was but a short time after their settlement at Richmond, that Amy, who managed every matter for her father, perceived

if they continued to live as they had done, they would soon exhaust the remaining resources they possessed. Yet to her it seemed impossible to lessen the yearly expenditure; the house, or rather cottage in which they resided seemed mean enough; it was their own, they lived in it rent free, no luxuries ever passed inside its doors, and a female servant and old Howitt, who still remained with them, were their only domestics.

Still, however, they were poor, and every day became poorer, till at last Amy resolved upon an expedient of making matters assume a more comfortable aspect by calling her exquisite talent for singing to her help. Without her father's knowledge, and under a fictitious name, she applied to the clergyman of the place, and begged him to assist her in the project she had formed of gaining a few pupils in that accomplishment amongst the families of the neighbourhood. Interested by her beauty and lady-like appearance this gentleman, after a few



enquiries about her, readily promised he would do so, and began by placing his own daughter, a girl of fourteen, under her care. Soon after, pleased with her general conduct, and the child's progress under her tuition, he recommended her to two or three of his female friends as a fitting instructress for their younger children in the art which she professed to teach, and thus placed her in a position which allowed her more easily to defray her household expenses.

For a while Amy concealed her new engagements from her father; but her long absences, and the greater number of comforts that appeared in the house at last aroused his suspicions, and after some questioning from him, she confessed the truth. Hurt as Sir Arthur was at the idea of his daughter being obliged to seek her living from the exertion of this accomplishment, which he had hitherto deemed an ornamental one, when she once told him her reasons for doing so, he could not object to them. He was aware they were fast sinking

into absolute poverty, and that unless some means were found to extricate them from their present embarrassment, they must experience a lowlier fall than they had yet had. True, one last resource was still open to them, and both the father and daughter thought of it; but they would rather have died than have sought it—it was that of applying to Cecil Bouverie for relief.

Thus, then, under the appellation of Madame Gioberti, Amy continued to give her daily routine of lessons, to the several pupils the rector so kindly introduced her to, and she felt happier as she did so, for she knew she was saving both herself and Sir Arthur from real distress.

And many wondered at the beautiful countenance of the Italian singing mistress, and whispered that she had known better days in the lovely land they supposed her native one, yet not a word of

her true history was hinted at, or even suspected.

Sir Arthur also changed his name and dropped his title; and still afraid of being recognised by some of his former acquaintances even in the secluded place where he now lived, he rarely ventured into Kingston or Richmond, and confined his daily walks to the by-ways and lanes that passed near his present home.

The last few years had changed him much, for the remorse which preyed upon his spirits became apparent in its outward effects upon his bodily frame—the tall, slight figure, already bent with premature age—the dim yet restless eye, and the haggard cheeks clearly told the continual mental agony he was enduring. For years, long years, he had lost his peace of mind: even in the first months after he was induced, by the embarrassments which a long run of extravagance threw him into, to conceal the fact of his marriage, the strong

touches of conscience tortured him with their pangs, and he felt there was no stilling them, while the wrong done to his nephew remained unrepaired.

Sir Arthur Bouverie's mind was naturally an upright one, and until his father's death he had carefully shunned the very shadow of meanness, so that when he fell beneath the strength of the temptation which beset him, and turned from the strict line of honourable thought and action he had hitherto maintained, the remorse which afterwards seized him, was only the more strongly felt. It is only those who have felt the peace of a virtuous conscience, that can ever feel in their full severity, the restless pangs of pain attending a guilty one.

The reading of the will surprised Sir Arthur, for to the moment of its actual perusal he had not had the slightest suspicion of its contents, as until that day it had been lodged in the hands of Sir Dudley's solicitor. He listened to them in astonishment—in dread; he felt him-

self rich and powerful as long as his marriage remained unknown ; he knew his debts were beyond his covering if he did not have the princely fortune his father left him, on the conditions before explained ; his wife and his child as he then supposed were both dead, and trying to believe the property was rightfully his own, and that a will so capriciously framed could not do away with his natural claim upon it, he rapidly reasoned himself into keeping silence upon the fact which would invalidate his right to it in the eye of the law. He reasoned himself into denying his marriage, but he never after regained his usual tranquillity of mind ; conscience stung him severely, and from that moment he lived a life of misery, ever wishing to retrieve the past, though not daring to face the shame such a resolution on his part would bring upon him.

And when he found the child alive whom he supposed was long since dead, that misery increased ; eagerly he followed up the proofs of

her identity as the daughter of his wife, fearfully he watched the progress which Cecil carelessly yet designedly made in her affections, and resenting the heartlessness with which he did so, pitying the hopeless love he saw written in Amy's countenance he determined to make his nephew marry her, to settle the greater part of the Bouverie property upon the former, and thus in a manner free himself, with an ostensible reason, of some portion of the wealth which he had felt as a burthen for many a long year.

It has been seen how he proceeded in his designs, and how unfortunately they ended; but it has yet to be revealed how deeply he regretted and deplored his first error, as well as his latter one. In the eye of his daughter, he found the bitterest punishment he could well feel; there he saw the quiet agony of a despairing spirit, the struggle after a seeming forgetfulness of the past before him; and knew the grief that possessed her heart was brought

thither by his own fault. And her voice—there were tones in that too, which thrilled the trembling chord of remorse within his bosom more wildly still, for half sad, faltering accents sometimes piercing through the tones of her ordinary conversation told him that had she not lived for him, she would have soon sunk beneath the blow, which rent the life-strings of her heart in severing her from the husband she loved.

And Sir Arthur at times left the presence of his daughter, unable to bear the sight of her silent sorrow, which because she spoke it not in words, she thought unnoticed. Unnoticed! could the loving father gaze on the pale face of his child, and not see it written there in characters too legible to be mistaken? No, no—he gazed—saw all the misery his past errors had wrought, and felt it deeply—as deeply as his severest enemy could have wished him to do.

And Cecil—Sir Arthur also thought of him



—in the self-accusing spirit of a man who saw the unhappiness his daughter experienced was his own work. If he censured him bitterly when the wrongs of Amy rose to his recollection he soon curbed his feelings to a more humble tone; he felt that he could reproach him but with the faults his own indulgence fostered, for he had never dared to restrain the haughty temper, or unforgiving pride of his nephew as he grew towards manhood.

Sir Arthur was no willing hypocrite—guilty as he was, he could not preach virtue to one less guilty than himself; he shrank from doing so, and to these feelings, which the error of his youth engendered in his heart, he sacrificed Cecil's fortune—welfare. Thus then, though a strong feeling of indignation possessed him against his nephew whenever he thought of his harshness towards Amy, he never for any length of time gave way to it; he felt he had no right to do so—for every reproach that in

the bitterness of his grief he directed towards him, glanced back upon himself.

And the summer months flew on ; autumn commenced, and Amy and her father still continued to reside where they were, as the former seemed to like the vicinity of Richmond, and his daughter, having formed several musical engagements with the families of the neighbourhood, did not wish to seek her fortune elsewhere.

Upon a sultry night towards the end of August, Sir Arthur and Amy sat in a little drawing-room that fronted the river. A tea-service was on the table, but at the time now spoken of the evening meal appeared to be finished, and Amy was just then rising, and in the act of wrapping a large, heavy-looking shawl over her shoulders.

“ Well, Amy,” said Sir Arthur, in an anxious tone—“ well, I see you will go ; yet it is unwise of you to do so, for the night will

prove a thick one, and surely Miss Standish does not expect you."

"Oh, yes, she does," replied his daughter, "she said she would, and she is very, very particular, I dare not disappoint her. Besides, she is one of my most promising pupils, father, and I should wish her to sing well at Mrs. Ormilie's, because, as every one knows I am her professor, it might be the means of introducing me to another family or two, so you see I have a motive, and a very good one, for going thither to-night."

"Yes," replied Sir Arthur, with a sigh, as he thought she was obliged to bend to the caprices of a stranger—"yes, Amy, but even the chance of gaining more pupils will scarcely compensate for the severe cold you are likely to have if you venture out on such a night as this."

"I assure you it is a very beautiful evening," rejoined Amy, "I own there is a little white

mist floating over the river, but even that has cleared off during the last half hour—look, father !”

And drawing aside the blinds, she bade Sir Arthur come to the window to assure himself of the truth of her assertions. It was a dull evening; grey clouds covered the face of the sky, but they did not appear heavy ones, and Sir Arthur walked back to his seat, better satisfied with the prospect of his daughter leaving him.

“ You will soon return, Amy ?” asked he.

“ Directly,” she answered, “ Miss Standish only wishes me to hear her sing two or three of her best songs before she goes to the *soirée* at Mrs. Ormilie’s. I will be with you again in less than an hour.”

“ And how are you going ?” rejoined he.

“ Oh ! by water,” replied Amy, “ it is such a long way round to Mrs. Standish’s by the lanes. I shall have Howitt to row me there—he is waiting for me even now.”

And hastily putting on her bonnet she walked out of the room on to the lawn, and from thence proceeded towards a light boat which floated on the river at the furthest end of the garden, where it was fastened by an old piece of cable to a wooden post in order to prevent it being borne away by the current. Into this conveyance she stepped, and was soon after followed by Howitt, who untying the rope pushed it off from the bank.

Full twenty minutes passed before Amy arrived at the place of her destination, and full an hour or more elapsed ere she again resumed her seat in the boat to return home, for her pupil, being anxious to excel in the songs she intended to sing, kept her there longer than she wished to stay, and when at last she left the house the evening had entirely closed in. There was no moon, and a thick mist seemed spreading over the water, yet the air was not chill, and pleasantly enough Amy proceeded homewards, glancing up every now and then at the

pretty houses on either side of the river. At times, too, as she neared some **more** than usually picturesque spot, old Howitt instinctively dropped his oars, and let his young mistress gaze for a moment or two upon it, ere he resumed them. He was as keenly alive as Amy to the quiet beauties of the scenes through which they were passing, and the sight of the quivering reeds that touched the water's edge, the fantastic shape of an old tree, or a secluded little cottage pleased them both, and caused them to linger, look, and think.

At length the boat moved gently towards a small villa built in the midst of some very pleasing scenery, about thirty or forty feet distant from the river, and Howitt as usual rested his oars for a second or two, and glanced up at it. The front of the house was brilliantly lighted, and through the half drawn crimson curtains of one of the rooms, a large party could be observed at dinner. The lights from this apartment shone on the veranda which ran all

round the house, and from thence glanced off upon the neighbouring trees with so pleasing an effect, that Amy as well as her old servant looked lingeringly towards it, till recollecting her father might be uneasy at her prolonged absence, she desired him to proceed homewards. Reluctantly obeying, Howitt pulled off from the bank near which they were, but in doing so, he did not heed a large tree that, growing near its edge, stretched several of its large branches far out over the river, and driving the boat against some of them which lay beneath its surface the little vessel was jerked on one side with a sudden shock. At the same moment, before they were entirely clear of the tree, Amy started from her seat, and completely losing her presence of mind as a thick upper branch swung back towards her from the position into which Howitt's awkward manœuvre had forced it, she sprang aside to avoid it, lost her equilibrium, and falling into the water upset the boat.



At the spot, where the accident happened, the river was sufficiently deep to afford but little chance for Amy's escaping, the usually fatal termination of similar accidents, because the boat, impelled towards the middle of the stream by the sudden side shock it received, capsized at some distance from the bank. Amy sank once—twice—and each time she rose to the surface of the water she heard her own wild cry for help echoed by Howitt, whom she saw struggling in the stream at a few yards from her. He had as slender hopes as she of saving her life, for he was feeble and weak, and could not swim. Again she sank, just as she saw lights hurrying to and fro over the lawn of the house before her, then the waters appeared to rush more heavily upon her, her strength seemed exhausted, and she knew she was about to lose her senses and her breath, when suddenly she felt herself borne along to the bank, and became conscious she was saved.

Two or three minutes after, Amy recovered

herself more fully, and perceived she was in the garden of the villa in front of which the unfortunate accident happened; two or three gentleman were around her, and one bore her into the house. But the brilliant sudden lights of the apartment she thus suddenly entered, bewildered her again for a moment or two, and she did not speak or move till she felt her bonnet hastily taken off, and heard a strong exclamation of surprise burst from one of the persons near her. The voice of the speaker she instantly recognised—wildly, and with a start, she looked up, and saw the face of her husband bending over her in astonishment. It was he who supported her, it was he who had saved her from an untimely death,—she knew it must be so, for she saw the water streaming from his clothes, as well as from hers, and surprised, confused, agitated, scarcely knowing what she did, she sunk from his arms, fell at his feet, took his hands in hers, and sobbed over them like a child.

“ Poor Madame Gioberti !” said a venerable old gentleman, who stood close to her, “ poor thing ! she is beside herself with joy at her escape.”

“ You know her then ?” asked one of his companions, “ Bouverie is lucky in saving such a beautiful creature as that—for she is beautiful though she looks just now like a dripping Naiad—you know her ?” he continued.

“ Yes,” rejoined the other, “ I know her well—she is my niece’s singing mistress—I have often met her at my sister’s.”

“ An Italian ?” said his friend ; “ yet the cast of her features is scarcely Italian, I should say.”

Cecil Bouverie turned round, and looked at the first speaker, fully comprehending his words, but utterly surprised at them. Three or four minutes had passed since his recognition of Amy, whom, unconscious that she was his wife, he indeed saved from a watery grave, yet he had not spoken another word or withdrawn his hands

from hers as she held them to her lips. He turned, and a deep flush of shame spread over his features as he thought of the want to which Amy and his uncle must have been reduced ere the former would have sought to gain a livelihood by her talents; he was heedless of everything save that one thought, and neither remarked the surprise of his companions, at the marks of strong agitation visible on his own countenance, or the warm tears of Amy as they fell over his hand. At last the dread of their mutual relationship to each other being suspected, and the confusion the discovery would create aroused him to action, and hastily he stepped from her side: Amy understood the meaning of that action, and of the cold, quiet look he gave her as she rose from the ground: she saw she must not openly dare to recognise him, she herself did not wish to be known for what she really was just then, and endeavouring to restrain her agitation she glanced timidly round the room.

It was richly furnished, and of large dimensions, the table, which stood in its centre, was laid out with fruit and wine, and about a dozen gentlemen sat or stood around it, looking curiously at her, till one of them, noticing her dripping appearance, beckoned to some female servants, who at that moment hurried into the apartment, and by his directions, they offered her their assistance in drying her clothes and hair.

“It is not worth while to give you so much trouble,” replied Amy, “I live exactly opposite, and if my man-servant is there I shall be at home in two minutes. Is he saved?” added she, suddenly, as if only then recalled to a sense of Howitt’s past danger.

“He is here, he is saved,” rejoined the old gentleman who was partially acquainted with her, “but he is in exactly the same state as yourself, Madame Gioberti; I would not advise either of you to cross the river in the condition you are now in.”

"That is scarcely of any consequence," answered Amy, civilly but decidedly, and uttering a few expressive thanks to the company before her, she bowed and passed on towards the veranda, while one of them observed—

"There are no thanks due to us, madam, it is to that gentleman you are indebted for the preservation of your life."

And he pointed to Cecil.

"Yes," answered Amy, walking up to her husband; and standing for a minute before him she trembled with emotion, as she looked earnestly up into his face, while the large tears she had been labouring to restrain from falling, rolled slowly over her cheeks, "yes, I know it is to him I am chiefly obliged, and—and he must see how deeply grateful I feel."

Her voice faltered as she spoke the last words, and impulsively, unthinkingly, perhaps, she held out her hand to him; with a look of cold surprise he stepped backwards, and let her pass

on. An expression of deep pain passed over Amy's features, one quick sigh, as if a rising sob were suppressed, escaped her—then, followed by two or three of the gentlemen, who came to see her into the boat, she left the room. One of her companions, as she walked over the lawn, gave her his arm.

“You live in yonder white house, do you not?” he asked, pointing to Amy's home, which was nearly opposite where they stood, “pardon the rudeness of the question, but I very much wish to know the name of the exquisite songstress who resides there—I am continually in this part of the country—and of an evening I have many times listened to the musical accents that floated from thence across the river—you live there, do you not?”

Amy answered affirmatively.

“Ah!” rejoined the gentleman, in a lower voice, as he handed her into the boat, “I thought so—I have very often seen you there—good night, Mrs. Bouverie.”



Amy started, looked up, and for the first time, in the dim, misty light, discerned that her companion was Count Auffenberg. But the next moment he was gone, and she perceived him entering the house through an open window against which her husband leaned.

At the sight of Cecil, the surprise Count Auffenberg's recognition occasioned her to feel was forgotten, her scattered thoughts were again wholly bent on him, and her eyes remained still strained towards the spot where he stood, as Howitt impelled the boat swiftly up the river. Five minutes after, she landed at the foot of her own garden, and entered her home.

It was with a paler cheek than usual, and with a beating heart, that Sir Arthur heard the tale of his daughter's peril and rescue; but he listened to it in silence, and made no comment upon her husband's conduct, and Amy, having once repeated it before him, did not again do so, for she never willingly spoke of Cecil in

her father's presence, as his very name seemed to pain him. Yet she treasured up in her memory the remembrance of that night; she had seen him, spoken to him—he had saved her life, and though he was stern and cold, still the moments she spent in his presence, all painful though they were, seemed to her far happier than the dull and hopeless ones which succeeded them. How one minute in the presence of those we love is prized, although we may even then feel acutely their utter indifference towards us!

About a week after Amy's last meeting with her husband, a close carriage stopped at the neat little wooden gate, opposite the back entrance of Sir Arthur's house, and a young lady descending from it, walked leisurely up the narrow gravel path which led towards its trellised porch.

She did not seem inclined to proceed more quickly, for she several times loitered to look round her before she knocked at the modest

looking door she approached. At last, however, she found courage to do so, and at the same time sounded the bell she perceived near it.

Her summons was soon after answered by a tidy-looking country girl, and in reply to her enquiry for Madame Gioberti she was informed she had a few minutes before left the house.

The lady seemed to pause for a moment or two in perplexity; then asked whether she could see madame's father. The maid servant looked surprised, and answered that her master was certainly at home, but as he rarely received visitors, if the lady came upon any musical business she had better wait till madame returned.

"Nevertheless," replied the visitor, "I must see him; and so if you would please to say I wish to speak with him for a few minutes I shall feel obliged. In the meantime," said she, stepping into a neat little room, the door

of which she perceived half open—"in the meantime I will remain here."

The girl obeyed her request, and while she went to bear the message she was given to Sir Arthur, the lady sat down on a neat-looking chintz sofa near one of the windows, and looked anxiously round the room.

She seemed puzzled at the result of her examination, and at length moving towards a grand piano placed close to the fire-place, began to turn over the music, which lay carelessly upon it. Again she appeared surprised, as her eyes wandered over the pages before them, till gradually her whole attention was apparently given to her own thoughts, and she remained leaning against the instrument in a deep reverie.

From this state of abstraction she was aroused by the entrance of Sir Arthur, and with some embarrassment she advanced towards him. A thick white veil falling from the green satin capote she wore completely

covered her face, so that Sir Arthur not being able to distinguish her features was the more astonished when she, as it were, instinctively held out her hand to him. In the next moment the veil was hastily thrown up, and the countenance of Kate Bouverie revealed.

“ I thought you would not be angry, uncle,” said she, blushing deeply, and speaking hurriedly, “ I thought you would not be angry with me if I came to see you ; Cecil told me where to find you, and—and I so much wished to speak with you.”

Sir Arthur’s brow flushed deeply as he recognised his niece, and he did not immediately speak, till perceiving Kate was growing uneasy, he forced himself to say—

“ I am glad to see you, Kate.”

“ Are you ?” answered she, with a bright smile, as she drew nearer to him ; and after asking for Amy, she began to talk of a thousand indifferent subjects, in fear lest an embarrassing

pause should ensue, and establish a greater constraint between them.

But her flow of conversation soon ceased, and silence after silence followed each other, till Kate suddenly stopping in the midst of a very common-place observation, rose, and said, with some agitation—

“Uncle, it is not for this I came—I wish very much—I do not know exactly what to say; but my brother said I ought to see you, and so if you will listen to me—you will not be angry, I hope?—dear uncle, this is what I want to say.”

And Kate then explained that Cecil had commissioned her to induce Sir Arthur to draw on the sum of money which for the last four years had been lying useless at his banker's. She said Cecil felt hurt at the idea of Amy being obliged to exert her talents in order to procure the means of subsistence, that he hoped she would not do so for the future; and earnestly Kate Bouverie pressed her uncle

to consider the wealth which her brother laid apart for him as his own.

Sir Arthur listened to her in silence, quietly waited till she finished all she had to say, and then gave a decided refusal to her entreaties.

"Amy," said he, "is not now under her husband's protection, but under mine; and Amy's answer to your persuasions, Kate, will be the same as I give you now. She lives with me, and while she does so, not one shilling of his money shall pass inside these doors. You speak truth when you say I feel the necessity of my daughter displaying her musical abilities in order to afford us the comforts we still have; but even that resource is better than the humiliation of applying to your brother for the means of procuring them. Dishonoured as he may think me, I cannot yet beg my bread from the hand of him I have injured—tell him so, Kate—that is my answer."

And not all the persuasions of Kate could induce him to retract even on the smallest



point from his above resolution. It was in vain that she entreated—he was inflexible; he grew even stern when she spoke very earnestly, and with something like his old tones of authority bade her be silent.

And Kate urged him no more, but with tears in her eyes rose to take leave; yet when Sir Arthur accompanied her to the door, she turned back, and said, eagerly—

“Uncle, will you let me stay the day with you? I wish to see Amy.”

“No, no, Kate,” replied Sir Arthur—“not to-day.”

“Another time, then?” rejoined she, “only say another time, uncle!”

“You cannot wish to see us, Kate,” answered Sir Arthur; “we had better not meet again.”

“Oh, do not say that,” replied she; “I must indeed come very often to see you and Amy—I must indeed.”

And she seemed as if she would not part with him until he had given her leave to do so.

Sir Arthur looked upon her tearful eyes, and listened to her eager voice ; he thought of Amy, the lonely, heart-broken Amy, he imagined Kate's kind friendship might in some degree sooth her restless, despairing spirit, and touched too with his niece's strong forgiving affection towards himself, he answered, as she was about to step into the carriage—

“ Come then, Kate, if you will—I may not refuse you any longer.”

The proud heart cannot always reject the sympathy that its sorrows sometimes win from others.

And Kate's face brightened with smiles as she heard her uncle's words ; and her last look as she drove away was one of gratitude.

## CHAPTER VI.

When mine arm is link'd in thine,  
When thine eyes upon me shine,  
With mild Friendship's sunny smile,  
Then my heart beats quick the while,  
And I feel I love thee !

Hast thou seen my pale cheek colour,  
And the tear but swell the fuller  
In mine eye, when thou wert gazing,  
With a look that hope was raising ?  
Then I dream'd thou lov'd'st me !

Hast thou heard my young voice falter,  
And the light laugh sudden alter,  
When I knew that thou wert near me ?  
Ah ! thou hast, and much I fear me,  
Thou dost see I love thee !

If 'tis so—then now withdraw thee  
From her side who lives but for thee,  
Ever true that secret keeping,  
I'll forgive thee, gently weeping,  
Though thou know'st I love thee !

IN the evening of the day on which Kate Bouverie saw Sir Arthur at Richmond, she met her brother at Mrs. Beresford's, when she told him the ill-success of the mission he had entrusted her with, he appeared much annoyed, for to say the truth Cecil could not be called a mean or covetous man, and his anger, however bitter, was never expressed in a way dishonourable to himself or to others. Therefore as soon as he knew there was no possibility of making his uncle accept the money he intended for his use, although his voluntary poverty could no longer be openly laid to his account, he nevertheless felt it as a secret reproach in his own heart, and consequently thought more

uncomfortably than was usual to him of the situation in which he was placed.

Cecil Bouverie wished Amy and Sir Arthur to live in easy circumstances, because, by doing so, they would have silenced the feeling of self-upbraiding which at times possessed him, when he reflected upon the privations they willingly imposed upon themselves, and on the present occasion he was much irritated at their firm rejection of the assistance he offered them. Still he could not but respect Amy for the silent patience with which she was bearing her lot, while sometimes conscience whispered that only an upright mind would thus endure it, and that had she been as mercenary as he supposed she was, she would have long ere this applied to him for relief.

Yet he would not listen to these better thoughts, and even on the evening we speak of, sharply rebuked Kate when she endeavoured

to soften his bad opinion of Amy and Sir Arthur, and soon after, left the house.

Kate was not particularly sorry that her brother went away, for of late he never rendered himself a very agreeable companion, besides, just then, she felt inclined to be alone. And why? the gentle reader asks—Kate Bouverie was in love, and at the present time was about to part from the gentleman to whom she had given her heart without his even suspecting the invaluable gift he possessed—Kate Bouverie loved Frank Beresford. It was very natural she should do so, considering that everything for the last two years had contributed to enhance his value in her eyes. He had not, however, been continually with her, as every now and then he had started on some new tour, sometimes to see Bessie Mackenzie, or to visit a few of his friends, and so not being always at the Square his society was the more prized when he did condescend to stay there for a month or

two. Meanwhile, he became evidently more pleasing in his conversation and manners, and Kate at last was sensible that there appeared to be very great danger of her falling in love with him. Soon after, she began to think she did love him.

This partial discovery of her real sentiments towards Frank vexed Kate, and she tried to think less of him; yet, strange to say, at the end of two months she saw clearly that she liked him better than ever. She found herself listening for his step, colouring when he spoke to her, she felt happy if he were near her, and sorry when he went away—knew her heart beat rapidly if he suddenly addressed her—in fact, Kate had all the unpleasant symptoms of being thoroughly in love. How she came to love is another question; still when it is considered she owed Frank her life, that he was very handsome, and no longer imitated the attractions or opinions of his old bookworm of a tutor, but rendered himself as pleasant, and as



conversible as any other agreeable gentleman of the present day, it will not perhaps be wondered at that Kate loved him. Yet this affection on her part was unfortunate, as she knew it must prove void of hope in consequence of his attachment to Bessie Mackenzie, and though she had hitherto failed in the attempt she still continually tried to conquer it.

Love never improves a woman's manners—at least towards the person she loves; it is a very great disadvantage to her, for she becomes timid and reserved, or else wishing to avoid the one extreme takes the other and appears lively, giddy, and talkative—perhaps too much so, to cover her real confusion. Love never leaves a woman's character as it found it; woman is taught deceit at the first approaches of love—shrinks within herself, and certainly seems less open and engaging than before.

Kate evidently became so; to Frank she appeared more irritable than she used to be, less cheerful, and he was often astonished at

the various moods she gave way to during the day. Sometimes she would be as kind as formerly to him, at others seem cold and reserved, then she would fall into a fit of forced gaiety, till a sudden thought apparently banished every trace of a smile from her face, and she sunk into a state of listless apathy. Yet Frank excused this uneven temper as he easily saw she was unhappy—for at times there was a sadness in her eye, which struck him with surprise, and the tones of her voice when she spoke to him were often unequal and ill-sustained—but he never guessed the secret she concealed from him—he never thought she loved.

And so things had progressed during the last two years; Frank's engagement with Bessie Mackenzie in the meantime standing still, and Kate loving without hope.

On the evening of which we speak Frank had determined to start on the following morning for a tour through Spain, and Kate felt

low-spirited and dull, for his absence was to be a long one.

Lady Eveline and Seymour were spending the day with her, and neither could at first understand the extreme listlessness of manner she evinced towards them. However, the former, to Kate's great relief, seemed much occupied with her own thoughts on the present occasion, and did not notice it aloud, while her cousin, who never tried to account for a woman's humours, also let it pass by in silence.

Towards the end of the evening Kate left the drawing-room with some particular orders from Mrs. Beresford to the house-keeper about the packing up of Frank's things, and Lady Eveline hailed her departure with a troubled smile, and walking up to Seymour, looked at him in evident confusion for a moment or two, then said she wished to speak to him.

"Your request is perfectly in accordance with my wishes," replied Seymour, "I was

just resolving to have some conversation with you, Eveline,—privately, too.”

Her ladyship did not seem to like the latter announcement, yet she sat quietly down by his side, and, with a timid air, was about to utter something when Seymour interrupted her, by saying—

“Is it a confession that you are going to make me?”

“I mean to tell you a secret,” answered she, with an embarrassed smile.

“About yourself?” asked Seymour.

“Yes!—and others,” said she.

“And I know what it is,” rejoined he, smiling.

Eveline looked surprised.

“I am sure you do not,” she answered, “I and Anne Morgans alone know it.”

“Anne Morgans!” laughed Seymour, “what a confidante for so delicate a secret!—she is your maid, is she not?”

“Yes,” replied her ladyship, looking at him in astonishment, “but why are you laughing, Seymour? I am sure you do not know what she told me last night.”

“Told you last night?” rejoined he, “my dear Eveline, do you think no one has eyes except Anne Morgans. I have known it ages ago—now listen to me—are you, or are you not in love—no, I will put the question in a more delicate manner—do you not feel a very high regard for Captain Stanhope?”

Her ladyship blushed crimson, and confusedly answered—

“I do not know what you mean—I do not like—”

“To answer me?” interrupted Seymour, “you need not tell me that, I see it clearly. But recollect, Eveline, I have a right to put the question to you, and you must give me a reply; or if you will not—here is another which perhaps you will answer more readily—Is it

not true you do not care at all for me—that you have long since ceased to regard me with any affection?”

Lady Eveline hung down her head.

“Come, confess the truth at once, Eveline, I will not be angry with you,” continued he, with a smile.

Her ladyship raised her pretty, tearful blue eyes furtively to his face, and seeing a good-humoured expression there, which very much reassured her, said with a gentle sigh, and a pearly tear—

“Indeed, Seymour, I could not help it.”

“Could not help it!” ejaculated Seymour, laughing heartily, “that is good! why, Eveline, you ran after him from the very first, you know you did. You fell in love with Captain Stanhope long before he ever thought of you.”

Eveline looked a little nettled and indignant.

“Indeed, Seymour,” said she, “you are very

rude, I do not know what you mean ; you were talking about my not liking you, and not about Cap—Captain Stanhope.”

“ Which subject naturally brings on the other my dear Eveline,” returned he, “ for you must feel you dislike me because you love Captain Stanhope. Now I am generous, Eveline ; I do not want a wife who will be always grieving after another man ; so from to-night I release you from your long standing engagement with me. Tell your father so, or perhaps I will—that is all I have to say to you, Eveline.”

Her ladyship was speechless with joy and gratitude ; a shower of sparkling tears fell like rain from her merry blue eyes, and a happy smile spread itself over her rosy and dimpled cheeks.

“ Dear Seymour !” she exclaimed, “ how good of you ! but,” she added a moment afterwards, “ I thought you did not love me.”

Seymour laughed outright.

“ Well, Eveline,” said he, “ you are quite a



study—you thank me and yet in the same breath accuse me of a deficiency of affection, thereby undervaluing the generous sacrifice I am about to make of your charming little self to my rival. I never saw a girl who so much amused me in all my life.”

“But,” said Lady Eveline, standing on tiptoe and clapping her tiny hands in delight, “but I can tell you of a lady about whom you will feel much more interested, who loves you exceedingly—and whom you ought to love when you know all.”

“When I know all, Eveline?” repeated Seymour, “oh! then you have a secret to reveal besides your own? about a lady too, at least so your words seem to hint. Well, out with it at once—who is in love with me now? yet recollect Eveline, I have had enough of woman’s whims and fancies, and I swear beforehand I will have nothing to do with her.”

“No, no,” replied Lady Eveline half terrified, “do not say that, Seymour, for she loves

you—oh ! so much—and you will be very, very sorry to think you cannot marry her.”

“Marry ! I marry,” rejoined he, “there is a fate against it, Eveline. But come, tell me the name of your friend.”

“Friend ! my friend ? she is more yours than mine—she is Edith L'Estrange, Edith L'Estrange !” answered Lady Eveline.

“Edith Beaufort !” exclaimed Seymour hastily. “Eveline, you know not what you say !”

“But I do, I do,” replied Eveline, “indeed she loves you, and must have done so a long while ago, or she would never have given you all the money she did.”

“Money !” repeated Seymour, a new light flashing through his mind, “money ; then it was Edith—”

“The lawsuit, the box, the sapphire ring !” cried her ladyship, eagerly interrupting him.

“Never, never,” exclaimed Seymour, “it cannot be, Eveline ; it seems impossible ! to

keep silence for so long a time. Good Heavens! and she loved me! Explain it all—and quickly!” said he, drawing his chair closer to her.

“Why,” replied her ladyship, “you must know when you left me last evening, I—I began to be very miserable, because—because—”

“There, never mind picking your words, my dear Eveline,” said Seymour, interrupting her “I understand—go on—speak plainly.”

“Well then,” rejoined she, evidently relieved, “I began to cry, and Anne tried to console me, and said that if I liked I might make you marry another lady, because she knew a secret which would oblige you to do so, unless you were very hard-hearted indeed. She told me that many years ago she lived as lady’s maid with Mrs. L’Estrange when she was unmarried and very rich, and one day her mistress sent her to your chambers in the Temple with a small box, which she desired to be very careful of delivering at the right house. Well, Anne never knew its contents till the other evening I

happened to mention your strange history before her—I think I was relating it to Miss Lee—when I particularized the box so exactly that she instantly recognized it as the one which she had been commissioned to leave at your lodgings years ago. Yet she did not say a word about the matter until last night.”

“And why not?” demanded Seymour.

“Because, no doubt, she thought it was not a pleasant secret for me to hear, Seymour, supposing I liked you ; but when she saw I did not, there was no reason for keeping silence on the subject any longer, and so she told me all about it, and I described the box to her more minutely than ever, and she is perfectly convinced that you are indebted to Mrs. L'Estrange for the money you received.”

Seymour looked up at Eveline quickly and penetratingly.

“Can this be true?” said he.

“To be sure,” replied she, “do you imagine I would tell you an untruth?”

“The packet was left at my door by a manservant,” suggested Seymour.

“Oh! he was Anne’s brother,” rejoined Lady Eveline, “he accompanied her there, and she gave it to him to deliver, because she did not wish to be known as Mrs. L’Estrange’s maid, if you happened to see the bearer. Her mistress desired her to do so.”

“Then good evening to you, Eveline,” said Seymour, hastily looking at his watch, “your father will come and fetch you home, will he not?”

“Yes, yes,” answered her ladyship, as she followed him to the door with a merry laugh, “never mind me. I know where you intend to go, but there, I am very happy, and I shall be glad to see you so too—good night.”

“Where is Mr. Glenallan gone, my dear?” asked Mrs. Beresford, “why has he left so soon.”

“To make Mrs. L’Estrange an offer, dear Mrs. Beresford,” answered Eveline, ensconcing

herself amongst the downy pillows of the sofa, and falling into a delicious reverie.

Mrs. Beresford seemed startled at this announcement, but being just then too much occupied with Frank, who was talking to her about some of his arrangements for starting on his approaching journey, she only thought her ladyship was jesting, and giving an incredulous shake of the head forthwith forgot it.

Meanwhile Seymour Glenallan, as Eveline sagaciously supposed, bent his steps towards Edith's house, until finding that too slow a method of proceeding, he called a cab, and drove there. It was full eight o'clock when he arrived at the door, yet upon asking to see Mrs. L'Estrange on particular business, he was shown into the dining-room where she was seated. Edith rose at his entrance, bid him good evening, and waited for what he had to say. But he did not utter a word, standing opposite to her with his hat in his hand, he fixed his broad, black, glowing eyes upon her

face, till astonished at the strangeness of his manner, she asked him on what errand he came. He moved a step or two closer to her, he gazed upon her beautiful countenance so statue-like in its classical dignity of expression, so exquisitely enlivened by the lustrous blue eyes—he was thinking, thinking of her silent and deep devotion for him—still not one syllable fell from his lips, and again in a hurried tone of voice she desired to know what he had to say.

“I love you!” was Seymour’s sole rejoinder.

Edith started, an extreme pallor spread over her features, and wildly, yet furtively, she glanced towards him.

“You are mad!” she murmured; then raising her head, in a low, faltering tone, she added, “what mean you?”

“This,” answered Seymour, his voice trembling with emotion. “I know all—know that you have loved me as I never thought woman could love; the money—Edith—the ring—all is revealed to me.”



Edith's brow crimsoned, and her whole frame drooped as it were with shame; she did not look up; the long, dark lashes veiled the deep blue eyes and a large bright tear sparkled on their lids; her lips moved as if to deny the truth of what he said, but they could not, for she had no power to speak.

"Edith," continued Seymour Glenallan as he took her hand and pressed it in his own, "speak truly—do you love me still? yes, yes, I feel love like yours cannot easily die away—then you are mine, Edith, mine are you not?"

"No," rejoined Edith, turning from him; "no, no, how knew you of this? how can you speak to me in this manner—recollect yourself, Mr. Glenallan, your engagement with Lady Eveline—"

"Is broken," interrupted Seymour.

"Broken!" replied Edith, and she turned her bright eyes, kindling with sudden and involuntary hope upon him, "broken! But,"

she continued, in a firmer voice, ‘ it makes no difference ; it is not because I chanced to help you that I would have you fancy yourself under any obligation to me. Friends as we were in youth, I wished to see you succeed to the estates which were rightfully yours, and as no one came forward to aid you, I did. It was a most natural action, and I would have done it openly, had I not been afraid of people imagining the very thoughts that are passing through your mind at this moment, Mr. Glenallan. I had a large fortune at my own disposal then, and money was nothing to me—do not consider yourself my debtor, pray—and as for the foolish idea that I love you—”

“ Do not deny its truth, Edith, do not,” rejoined Seymour, “ nor take from me the deepest happiness I have ever yet experienced. You speak thus haughtily, perhaps, because you imagine a mere sense of gratitude sends me hither to offer you my hand ; think not so,

Edith—gratitude, indeed, I may feel, but a deeper sentiment also mingles with it. Your beauty, your character, I have long since admired—and now—Edith, how can I stand unmoved in your presence? how can I not love you? affection such as yours I sought for, and never hoped to find; having found it do you think I will relinquish it? No, no, ask your own heart whether the love it has given me does not deserve its full return—ask your own heart whether I must not love you.”

Edith listened in silence; yet no longer coldly, for she was unable to conceal her agitation at feeling the long, enduring love of many years requited. Pride, however, still spoke in her dark blue eye, and soon after in her words and manner, even then she wished to dismiss Seymour Glenallan from her presence without actually avowing her love. But he did not suffer it so to be; he knew her well, knew her high spirit was tortured by the reflection, that

she had long loved him in vain, and again and again declared his sincere affection for her, and besought her to be his.

And Edith's pride gave way ; her dark blue eyes drooped again, her small white hand was passed hurriedly over her face to hide the blushes rising there ; but Seymour knew enough of woman's heart to feel that love was in the ascendancy, and approaching her, he once more pleaded eloquently for the words he wished her to utter—pleaded in a manner which effectually silenced the whisperings of her pride, and bade her gently listen to him. She turned her tear-sparkling eyes upon him, she glanced up into his face with a soul beaming look of love, and Seymour read that glance aright, knew he was loved as he long wished to be loved—devotedly.

Later in the evening Seymour listened to a more explanatory avowal of Edith's affection. It appeared he was her first love, and that when a very young girl she cherished a deep affection

for him, although she was not aware of its real strength till her father one day desired her to receive an old friend of his as her future husband. This friend was Mr. L'Estrange, a man whom she had always disliked, and her repugnance towards him, combined with the love she felt for Seymour, made her at once declare she could not consent to do so. But to this answer Mr. Beaufort did not listen, and at length, by harsh as well as gentle means, obliged her to marry him. Afterwards Edith knew her father, who was a merchant, had been unfortunate in some speculations upon which he had ventured, and that Mr. L'Estrange received her hand as an indemnity for the large sums of money which he advanced to supply his friend's necessities. The notes Edith sent to Seymour was the whole of a small legacy left her by her grandmother, and being then of age, she was able to withdraw it from the funds, and forward it to him in the manner she did. Mr. Beaufort knew nothing of the transaction;

it was the last act she performed before she married Mr. L'Estrange, on the last day she could guiltlessly think of him. Four-and-twenty hours after she stood at the foot of the altar, and bade adieu to hope and happiness as she thought for ever.

But happiness sometimes follows us lingeringly though surely through many a painful and perilous path, and so it followed Edith, so at length overtook her ; and now with a smile she looked back upon the phantoms of sorrow and despair which had hitherto attended her steps, turned towards Seymour, and felt all the dark clouds that seemingly hung over her future life were cleared away.

## CHAPTER VII.

“ Oh ! never more shall I hear that voice  
Or again the lov'd one see,  
And his smile which bade my heart rejoice  
Is ever more lost to me.

They say that he is another's now—  
'Twas a dream to think him mine !  
And the love of my youthful heart I know  
Must die in its secret shrine.”

“ I would I knew thine inmost thought,  
Or saw that hazel eye  
One moment with love's bright beams fraught  
Acknowledging the tie  
That binds thine heart to mine I trust,  
Thou fair, sweet idol of the dust !



I lov'd thee long, I love thee now,  
I would I knew thine heart,—  
Mine ev'ry thought to thee I show—  
Can thy lips say we part?  
Ah no! thou canst not, wilt not pain  
'The heart such words must rend in twain.

I see thy white brow gently flush,  
I hear a faint low sigh,  
And watch thy lips half broken hush,  
The beaming of thine eye  
Which still is downcast, turns away,  
And yet thou dost not answer nay.

Soul of my soul, thine hand in mine  
A single word I hear,  
I see thy smile upon me shine—  
Thy bright and fallen tear,  
And know thee for mine own, mine own,  
Feel thou hast lov'd but me alone!"

ABOUT the same time as Seymour Glenallan was wending his way towards Edith, Kate Bouverie returned to the drawing-room, and studiously avoiding Frank, walked towards Lady

Eveline, and sat down by her on the sofa. Her ladyship instantly aroused herself from the pleasant train of thoughts she was pursuing, and looked delightedly up into her face.

“Kate,” said she, “I have strange news for you—Seymour and I are no longer engaged.”

“Indeed!” answered Kate, with a start of surprise, “how comes that, Eveline?”

“Why, he asked me whether I loved him or not, and told me to tell him the truth, so I said no,” rejoined her ladyship.

A smile came over Kate’s face, and recollecting what Seymour had formerly hinted to her.

“Well, Eveline,” she replied, “you have managed matters admirably well, I must say,—and now I suppose you intend to marry Captain Stanhope?”

Eveline looked down with a smile and a blush.

“I must ask papa,” said she, “I do not know—”

"A truce to prudery, my dear Eveline," interrupted Kate, "you are very well aware that now the engagement with Seymour is broken off you can do what you like with the Earl."

"Well," rejoined Lady Eveline, laughing, "I think Seymour was just as tired of me as I was of him, and by this time I dare say he is engaged to some one whom I am sure he always liked much better."

And she explained all Edith's history to Kate, and the latter, though her thoughts were very much occupied with Frank, could not entirely forbear wondering over, and questioning her about it.

"Ah! I have other news, too, for you, Kate," said Eveline, after her companion had exhausted her exclamations of surprise, and again sunk into silence, "who do you think I saw when I was down in Wiltshire?"

"How can I guess?" replied Kate.

"Mrs. Bouverie."

"Amy!—in Wiltshire?"

“ Yes !” rejoined Eveline, “ you know papa and I spent some weeks there in the summer with Aunt de Beauvoisin. Well, it happened one evening after we had been taking a long country drive with Lady Haviland, that, as we were returning home, we called on Mrs. Tyler—you know Mrs. Tyler, Kate, do you not ?”

“ Yes, yes !” answered Kate, “ what has she to do with Amy—go on.”

“ We called on Mrs. Tyler,” continued her ladyship, “ and she kept us with her for an hour or two—you remember what an eternal talker she is I dare say—she perfectly stuns one—and her voice is neither low nor sweet—which is a remarkable disadvantage to her, for people will listen to the continual warblings of a noisily inclined singing bird, but not to the notes of a screech owl. What was I going to say ? ah, yes ! well, we stayed so long with her that it was bright moonlight when we again set off for Aunt’s, and in one of the lanes near Wilverton who should I see but Mrs. Bouverie,

Captain Stanhope, and his father! Only think, Kate, how dreadful it was to be introduced to the vicar—I believe he is a vicar, is he not? I nearly sunk with confusion—however, he is a very nice old man—I should say he was full fifty years old—and he gave me such a sweet smile—do you know, Kate, I heard he is become very rich lately—not that I care for the money, in marrying Herbert, but papa does, and that makes all the difference, you see.”

“I wish,” interrupted Kate, with a sigh of impatience as she listened to Eveline’s continual digressions from her principal subject, “I wish you would tell me something about Amy.”

“I am coming to her, all in good time,” said Eveline, “I told you I saw her in the lane, did I not? yes—and your brother—”

“Cecil? was he with you then?” asked Kate anxiously.

“Ah, I forgot to inform you of that.”

answered Lady Eveline, "he met us at Mrs. Tyler's, and rode home with us."

"Indeed!" rejoined Kate still more eagerly, "and did he see Amy?"

"Of course he did," replied Eveline, "and he gave her such a look! my dear Kate if Herbert were to give me one like it, it would kill me, absolutely kill me, I am sure."

"And did he speak?" again demanded Kate.

"Speak?" rejoined Eveline, "no, he immediately followed aunt's carriage, and left her standing in the middle of the road, as if she were some old beggar woman, Kate—well, I never liked your brother, and I am afraid I shall very soon hate him—begging your pardon for saying so. I rode up and spoke to Mrs. Bouverie, and I said I would tell you I had seen her, although she entreated me not to do so; still I was determined you should hear of it, because I thought you would like to see her."

Kate wondered Cecil never mentioned this

rencontre to her, and then curious to learn whether Eveline knew where Amy's present residence was, asked her if she had seen her since that time?"

"No," rejoined her ladyship, "I went to the village the very next day, and enquired for Mrs. Bouverie, but the people seemed to know nothing about her. I believe she went away that very night, because I never saw her afterwards, although in my walks and rides about the country, I looked under every lady's bonnet that passed me—yes, indeed."

"And did Lady Haviland perceive her?" asked Kate.

"I am sure I do not know whether she did or not," replied Eveline carelessly for she knew nothing of Amy's jealousy with regard to the Countess, "but Kate, of all beings on earth I most dislike that Lady Haviland. You must know she is my aunt's near neighbour in Wiltshire, and when I was down there she continually dragged me to Haviland House—much



against my will I assure you. Aunt Beauvoisin said it was a charity to spend an hour or two with a forlorn widow—forlorn! my dear Kate—why the Countess invariably saw company even then, and as for your brother he seemed always with her. I am sure he was very glad when her husband died—you should have seen how coquettishly her cap was arranged! How that woman dresses herself up, Kate—the Earl has only been dead a twelvemonth too!”

Kate heard all Eveline had to say rather listlessly, and after the first surprise she experienced at the announcement of Amy and her ladyship having met, she did not appear inclined to speak. In truth she was thinking of Frank, and felt therefore very glad when about half-an-hour afterwards her companion left her to return home.

Yet even then Kate did not move from the sofa where she sat, but continued to lean musingly against its cushions, her hand half-covering her eyes, which were filled with tears.

She was thinking of her love for Frank, of her approaching separation from him. A long period was to expire before she again saw him ; in that time she knew not what might happen, and painful thoughts filled her mind as she thought of the fast coming morrow. Little did Frank Beresford guess the love existing for him in the heart he once uselessly sought to win. Even Kate herself did not feel its real strength until now, for knowing his attachment to Bessie Mackenzie she had always imagined she believed her affection a hopeless one, inasmuch as she bore the knowledge of that engagement with calm resignation. But it was not so ; unconsciously, perhaps, she had allowed hope to lurk within her bosom—it grew there slowly and imperceptibly, and the acute grief she at present experienced in parting with him was the more severely felt from its sudden withering. The living seeds of hope though they may for years secretly buoy it up, are not recognized in a heart long accustomed

to despondence, till a sudden tempest of despair sweeps over it, and lays bare the place where they have been.

In the midst of her sorrow Kate, however, found consolation in knowing that she had never willingly fostered her love for Frank, and that he did not in the slightest degree suspect its existence. Kate was not one of those young ladies who give way to an unrequited affection because they imagine, it invests them with an air of romance, or of interesting weakness; she had good common sense, and knew love could be conquered with care and time as well as any other passion. She felt the struggle would be a long and painful one, and knew she would ever feel that lingering tenderness towards him which a first affection invariably leaves behind it, but nevertheless she resolved not to falter in her endeavours for all that, she determined to stand the trial firmly.

Awakened then to a full sense of her real love for Frank, Kate shunned him, and even on

the present evening, the very last she was to spend for many a long day in his presence, she avoided him as much as she could. Sometimes, however, as if to test the strength of our best resolutions to their furthest point, we are called upon to act in circumstances which seem destined to overthrow them. Thus it happened to Kate Bouverie.

"Kate, my love," said Mrs. Beresford from the other end of the room, where she was sitting with her son, "Kate, come here! why are you seated so far off, my dear?"

"I have the headache, mamma," replied Kate, and I do not wish to be near the lights."

"But you are just beneath the chandelier," persisted Mrs. Beresford, "I assure you we do not find the glare so brilliant where we are; and besides if your headache is not a very bad one, I wish you would help me to write this letter for Frank, or do it yourself altogether, as I have not my glasses with me."

Kate rose from the sofa rather unwillingly, and walked towards the table at which Mrs. Beresford and her son were seated.

“What does he wish me to say?” said she, addressing Mrs. Beresford, and she took a pen and some paper in her hand, “who am I to write to, mamma?”

“Oh! to a mathematical instrument maker, my love, but ask Frank, he will tell you all about it.”

Kate turned to Frank, and while she glanced up at him during the space of a full minute a deep blush covered her face, and her eyes were instantly cast down again, yet addressing him in as indifferent a tone as she could assume, she asked for the particulars she wished to know, and commenced the letter, he meanwhile being busily engaged in writing another.

For some time Kate and Frank continued to write in silence, till Mrs. Beresford left the room to enquire whether everything was fully arranged for her son's departure on the morrow.

Quietly, and without speaking a word Kate finished her letter, and after having given it to Frank, rose from her chair, and moved towards the fire-place. He seemed to notice the movement with a peculiar degree of irritation, while for a second or two his lips quivered as if he were about to speak, then suddenly he bent his head over the paper beneath his hand, and recommenced writing as before. But Kate did not long continue speechless, for imagining that her utter silence during the last three or four hours must appear strange, she forced herself to say,

“ And you leave us to-morrow, Frank ? ”

“ Yes,” replied he, without once looking up from the letter he was composing.

He spoke the word in a quick, sharp tone, as if hurt by her cold indifference towards him, and Kate could not bear to feel they would part in apparent anger with each other, and in a kinder tone said—

“ How long are you going to remain away ? ”

The sudden change in her voice seemed to surprise him. Hastily lifting his eyes to her face he repeated her words.

“How long?” said he, rising from his chair, and advancing towards her—“how long? As long as I shall love you, Kate.”

Kate turned round, and fixed her dark eyes piercingly upon him. She thought he was jesting; and though a flush coloured her brow, she still had sufficient firmness to prevent all other traces of agitation from appearing on her countenance.

“As long as you love me?” she replied, with a forced smile—“do you, then, love me, Frank? and where is Bessie Mackenzie, the long adored—the fair?”

Frank looked impatiently at her.

“Are you ridiculing me?” asked he.

“Ridiculing you?” returned Kate, in surprise.

“Yes,” he rejoined, “you must have long since felt, long since known Bessie Mackenzie



was only an imaginary being—that it was you alone I loved, and still love.”

“ You love me ! ” exclaimed Kate, gazing at him in astonishment.

“ Kate, Kate,” answered Frank, “ you know I do—else you would not be thus cold and distant to one who not for many a long day has willingly offended you. It is perhaps in kindness you are so ; you do not wish to encourage the hopes which you see have still root in my heart. Yet, Kate, that cutting indifference on your part has pained me much ; you have not even treated me as a friend—you have been—no, I will not say unkind—that is too harsh a word—but your utter dislike towards me has not been sufficiently dissembled.”

“ I have never disliked you, Frank,” answered Kate, and the large tears rolled over her cheeks.

Frank noticed her emotion, and thinking his last words wounded her feelings, he took her hand, and said—

“Forgive me then, Kate, if I have done you the injustice of believing you wronged your old playmate; and let us at least part friends—that is all I hope for at present. Once I thought I could make you love me—yes, even after your refusal, I imagined you might yet be mine. Still I did not know you were so necessary to my happiness till we parted, for those few short months; but then I found your image mingled incessantly with all my thoughts, that my heart was wholly yours. I reflected upon my erroneous opinions towards you, and other women—love teaches a man a better opinion of your sex in a month, Kate, than he could gain by twelve years of study and reflection—and I came back with the intention of disavowing them in part, and of striving for your love in a way more suited to win it. Yet for fear of your easily perceiving my purpose, and becoming prejudiced against me, I determined to feign an engagement elsewhere, that I might more readily and with

less embarrassment, try to please. My weak project has failed. I plainly perceive you feel no affection for me—never can; I know that I ought not to remain here, for I cannot speak with you—see you, day by day, and not feel an increase of the love I bear you. I have done wrong, then, in seeking your society so often—I know my too visible affection has angered you; still you must forgive me the embarrassments my presence in this house have hitherto caused you to feel—let us, as I said before, at least part friends—will you not, Kate?—What! not one word!”

No, Kate could not speak; there was an attempt to force some words into sound, but they died upon her lips in imperfect murmurings; a half sob broke from her bosom, and drawing her hand from his, she glanced up at him for one moment with her dark, tearful eyes, as if beseeching him to read her answer in them, and then her tears flowed afresh.

Frank stood as if thunderstruck; the truth

was breaking upon him ; yet ere he had time to speak one word Kate moved away—she thought he did not understand her, or perhaps would not, and with a crimsoned cheek, she hastened towards the door. But though slow in speech, Frank was quick in thought and action, and before she could effect her purpose he caught her in his arms.

“ Stay for one moment,” he said ; “ Kate, tell me if the thoughts that this minute are passing through my mind, which have given a new colouring to several of your later deeds and words—be true—tell me, have you not loved—do you not love me ? ”

There was a slight struggle at first on Kate's part to escape from his embrace, but it ceased ere he finished speaking, her head drooped upon his shoulder ; surely there needed not words to confirm her love ; yet did he bend his head to hear the gentle yes her beautiful lips sighed forth.

I know not how long Frank Beresford could

have listened to the confused though interesting explanation Kate soon after gave him of the gradual growth of her love for him, and her assumed coldness; I only know they were suddenly interrupted by the rustle of a stiff silk dress near them, and Frank in surprise actually dropped the little, soft hand he held in his, and with a half comic expression of surprise, glanced upwards, while Kate, who was leaning on his arm, suddenly relinquished it, and stepped aside.

“Well, mother,” said Frank, addressing the owner of the silk dress, who stood before him in a kind of joyful bewilderment—“well, mother, you are astonished. I suppose?”

“Are you going away to-morrow?” asked Mrs. Beresford in breathless surprise.

“No, no.” replied Frank, laughing; “what, leave Kate now, mother?”

“Oh!” exclaimed Mrs. Beresford, “then it is as I hoped it would be?”

“Exactly so,” answered he. “Kate and I intend to marry each other.”

“ Frank ! my dear son ! ” continued Mrs. Beresford, her eyes running over with tears of pleasure—“ no, you do not say so, do you ? How glad I am ! But you are jesting, perhaps ? ”

“ Jestings ! I would not have this a jest for the whole world,” he returned. “ Ask Kate whether I am jesting.”

Mrs. Beresford turned appealingly to Kate, and Kate stepped forwards, half laughing, half crying, and kissed her.

“ Ah ! ” said Mrs. Beresford, as she glanced at her blushing countenance, “ now I know it . is true, my own, dear, darling, beautiful Kate, —how happy I am ! it is just as I wished it to be ! ”

“ And all the pleasanter because we made you wait so long for the dénouement, mother, is it not ? ” observed Faank.

“ Well, perhaps it is, rejoined Mrs. Beresford. “ Ah ! the day of your marriage, my dears, will be the happiest day of my life. But how

did all this happen? how did you change your mind, Frank? What will Mr. Ramsay say!"

"Ah! Ramsay," laughed Frank—"he and I quarrelled about Kate two years ago. He taxed me with being in love with her, and because I would not take his advice, and discontinue to see her, we parted for a while. He is very irritable—he will be much annoyed at my present happiness, but what of that? time must reconcile him to it. What is a friend to a wife?—I mean a wife like you will make, Kate—the friend and the loving woman combined in one."



## CHAPTER VIII.

Who loves, raves—'tis youth's frenzy—but the cure  
Is bitterer still.

BYRON.

THROUGH the splendid drawing-room of Lady Haviland's mansion in Wiltshire soft and lustrous lights were shining, and the rich music of a full band was sounding.

The scene was a costly one; a long suite of apartments, filled with expensive furniture, and

brilliantly lighted up, was thrown open, the entrance of each room being hung with rich curtains of crimson silk and white lace, apparently looped back with wreaths of living flowers. Large pier-glasses and silver candelabra decorated the walls, and on the marble slabs, placed at intervals before them, rested vases of crystal and china, containing large bouquets of rare exotics. Lovely countenances, sweet voices, and beautiful forms, were there,—bright, glorious smiles, and tears, half-hidden tears, whispers of love, and whispers of scandal, kind hearts and false ones, happiness and misery, loveliness and deformity—all were there. The proud, the grave, and the gay mingled in the dance, listened to the music, or turned, perchance, to answer the pleasant words of their fair hostess, if she chanced to address them, as she glided through the splendid crowd, smiling happily and graciously upon those around her.

The first year of Lady Haviland's widowhood had ended, and, to the world, she seemed free, happy, and rich, for no one supposed that she cared for the Earl when she married him, or needed much consolation when he died, and left her a beautiful widow of eight-and-twenty. The Countess, in fact, was not a very great hypocrite in that respect; she made no particular show of affection towards the memory of her late husband, and after a short retirement, re-entered the gay world, to reassume her former enviable situation in society. Yet, in reality, she was not so much to be envied; for her jointure was not very large, as the Earl, through a superstitious dislike, having put off making a will unto the last moment, never made one at all, and thus, no second provision being made for her, she was left in circumstances, which her late habits of extravagance did not agreeably coincide with. Haviland House, indeed, was hers during her

lifetime, but the expense of keeping up that establishment drew largely on her purse, and she remained ill at ease on the score of money matters. Proud as she was, and fond of show, she disliked retrenching in anything from her usual extravagant style of living, and did not; yet perceiving that this in the end would cause her some embarrassments, like a true woman of prudence, she set about providing a remedy against them. Lady Haviland was no reckless spendthrift; her calculations were sound and skilful enough!—as coolly and as admirably as she tested the power of her beauty, upon the hearts of those who were pleased to call themselves her admirers, so did she now put the advantages and disadvantages of her present position to the proof.

She saw them all, and planned her schemes accordingly. She felt there was but one chance of permanently keeping up her present course of living, which was to form a second matrimonial alliance, upon the same interested

motives as the first. Her Ladyship knew herself to be beautiful, fascinating, in the fashion, and skilful in conducting any plan of action she might take in hand. Skilfully, then—quite artistically, she conducted this one; she did not spread her baits before the middle-aged, or the man of five-and-twenty or thirty, but only before the youth, or the dotard of eighty. She knew that the latter class of persons would be easily blinded to her charms, and she feared—what charming diffidence!—she feared the former might perceive the bent of her wishes, and partially reveal them to others. The Countess was particular on one point, even yet; she felt concerned about her reputation, and did not exactly relish the title of a husband-hunter.

And under her admirable management, things progressed surely; by dint of a gentle perseverance, she fully enslaved a soft-headed, silly youth, whose title of Marquis pleased her fancy, and whose rent-roll won her hand.

She saw the full depth of her power over him, and rejoiced in the success of her schemes; still there was one sad drawback to their immediate success, and this consisted in the lover not actually proposing, but continuing to linger near her and look at her, as if his peculiar method of lingering and looking, would fully acquaint her with his wishes and devotion, So, in fact, it did; yet matters would not have been nearer the desired conclusion, if they had rested there, and Lady Haviland saw, that unless she partly made the proposal herself, there would be but little chance of her becoming Marchioness of L——.

Accordingly, she resolved to bring him to the point on the present evening, and for that purpose, was more than usually attentive to him. Quietly covering her manœuvres by some exquisite feint, she continually addressed the young nobleman, and calling to her aid every bewitching grace she could think of, finally wrought him to the desperate resolution

of risking his fate that night. Poor fellow! how he dreaded to speak the words she was angling for!

Towards the middle of the evening, the Countess stood alone at the top of one of the inner rooms, glancing down through the whole magnificent suite, with a look of pride and self-satisfaction, for she had just left the Marquis, and she felt, by the hasty words he then involuntarily uttered, that he would be hers before he left the house. She stood there, with a flush of gratified vanity upon her damask cheek, because she knew she should not be obliged to diminish the splendid luxuries around her; that greater wealth than she had yet enjoyed would be hers. Very lovely did the Countess look; her jet black hair fell in shining ringlets around her fine face, and the dark, massy plaits, circling the back of her head, were only relieved by a wreath of white and red velvet leaves; a string of pearls, from which hung a ruby cross, was fastened round



her neck, and a bright, crimson silk scarf, tied about her slender waist, alone enlivened the simple white tarlatane dress she wore. Yet the plainness of her attire became her well; no lady in those rooms could vie in beauty with their fair mistress.

And now, leaning her arm upon a table near her, Lady Haviland's eyes glanced cursorily over her guests, till they rested on one, whom she would have rather just then avoided—on Cecil Bouverie. He was there—standing at a little distance from her, looking at her in her bright beauty. Her eyes fell beneath his admiring glance, because, occupied as she was at that moment, with the near fulfilment of her plans, she could not well sustain it, and a deep blush rose to her brow. Cecil was the only one, for whom she had ever felt any affection, and though that affection was selfish and sordid, still, until her marriage with the Earl, it was the best feeling which possessed her heart.

Yes, Lady Haviland loved Cecil as far as she was capable of loving, that is to say she preferred him to all other men, she cared for his opinion of her, felt jealous of his regard, and took more than general pains to please him. There was a lingering, loving feeling of the woman about her still; she felt a harsh word from him severely—she could not bear to see him even slightly careless of her, and was ever contriving to keep alive the passion, which for years had brought no good either to the one or to the other.

Her ladyship rejoiced to see how high she stood in his opinion—how deeply he loved and respected her, and even at times experienced a pang when she thought she was deceiving him. Yet she did not for all that falter in her present schemes—he was married; he could not give her the rank or the riches she coveted, and so she resolved not to sacrifice a splendid settlement in life for a few qualms of feeling about

a lover who never appeared likely to become hers.

Still the Countess could not help a sense of shame stealing over her, as her eyes fell beneath his on the present occasion, for she felt that within a very short time she would belie all the protestations of affection she had ever given him, and again become the wife of one whom he, as well as others, must know she did not love.

She saw him advancing towards her, as if about to speak, and hastily turning away, she said a few insignificant words to a lady near her, and then moved onwards through the brilliant throng.

“Is monopolization the order of the day, Lady Haviland?” said a gentleman, suddenly addressing her, as she passed him—“will you deign to accord five words to the most humble of your servants?”

“You speak ambiguously, Count Auffenberg,”

replied her ladyship—"pray explain your meaning."

"Why," returned the Count with his usual impassible smile, "I only wished to know whether your ladyship's old admirers are to be distanced by your new one."

"Nay, now that is a most Sphinx-like enigma," rejoined Lady Haviland, with a conscious blush—"who is my new admirer?"

"I do not think you need ask me," replied Count Auffenberg, fixing his dull grey eyes on her flushing face; "surely every lady knows the list of her *adorateurs*, and when she may put down an addition to it."

"Yes," answered the Countess, with a bland, no-meaning smile, "she does; but then she never pretends to do so, Count—therefore do not give yourself the trouble of asking me for mine."

"*Bien, bien, tres bien*," said the Count, "I will take your advice; it is the only word of

truth I have heard for a long time. People are particularly addicted to falsehood I think—now the only woman I ever knew to speak the truth openly and well was your little friend Mrs. Bouverie.”

“ Mrs. Bouverie,” exclaimed the Countess, haughtily—she was no friend of mine.”

“ Well, well,” rejoined the Count, with a peculiar sneer—“ the wife of your friend, Mr. Bouverie.”

And leading her to a seat, he was about to place himself by her side, when as he saw the young Marquis of L—— approach them, with a sudden glance of his eye towards the opposite corner of the room, he moved forwards.

“ Lady Havil nd,” said he, “ do you not feel a draught by the side of the door? had you not better take yonder seat?”

And he pointed to an ottoman near the entrance of one of the rooms.

Her ladyship gently bowed assent, at the

same time giving an encouraging smile to the young nobleman, who she perceived was about to follow them, and the Count led her slowly to the seat in view, meanwhile allowing full time for the Marquis to join them ere they seated themselves upon it. Two or three minutes after as he saw Lady Haviland and her companion eagerly speaking together, Count Aufferberg rose, and with a strange look of amusement, left them.

Half an hour passed, and her ladyship and the Marquis yet remained seated on the ottoman, the figure of the former being nearly concealed by the folds of a large lace curtain, that divided an inner room from the one where they were sitting, and which some of the dancers having partially disarranged, had inattentively thrown over the seat close to it, without perceiving that in doing so they partly enveloped their hostess with its figured drapery. Yet the Countess rather thanked them for their careless-

ness, as it afforded her a better opportunity for conversing easily with her companion.

They had been speaking together for some time; an embarrassed air was visible upon the countenance of the youthful Marquis, while a pleased smile just parted the lips of the Countess; a slight pause seemed to exist between them, but at last the latter broke it with these words—

“The love you speak of,” said she, glancing up at him with her large, oriental eyes, and hastily clasping and re-clasping a pearl bracelet that encircled her wrist, “the love you speak of must be a feeble flame. I do not exactly believe in those silent, sullen lovers who treasure up all the feelings of their hearts in solitude, and never express them by word or looks. Love speaks its presence either in the eye or in the tongue. I certainly should not believe in the affection of a man who never told me he loved me.”

“You would not?” replied the Marquis;



“ cannot you imagine that respect and fear may keep a lover silent when he would most wish to speak ?”

“ Yes, at times, but not for ever,” replied the Countess, archly ; “ respect is all very well in its place, and we women love to see our adorers approach our presence with a sort of reverence ; yet if that feeling utterly tongues them, and never suffers them to express the sentiments they feel for us, why sometimes we would rather dispense with it. Nay, do not look so incredulous, my lord—I tell you nothing but the truth.”

“ Still,” rejoined the Marquis, his voice trembling with emotion, “ cannot you conceive a man who loves, would speak his love, and yet dares not for fear of being banished from the sight of her he loves for ever ?”

The Countess looked demure.

“ Yes,” she replied, “ I can conceive it—just conceive it ; but I do not see why he should

feel so perfectly certain that he will be so banished."

"Love teaches fear," rejoined he.

"Then," replied the Countess, laughing, "Love is a traitor to himself, and defeats his own ends. I can imagine a woman loving silently, hopelessly—not a man—at least not when there seems the slightest chance of winning her he loves. But come," she added, half rising from her seat as she keenly watched his features, "I have rested sufficiently—I will join the dancers now, my lord—I believe it is to you I am engaged for this waltz, is it not?"

The Marquis turned eagerly towards her, as she half rose from the ottoman, the last hope seemed to vanish from his countenance.

"Lady Haviland," he whispered, almost breathlessly, "stay for one moment, stay—I feel I must speak—your words appear to imply that you would not be utterly displeased with me if, if I—nay, you must have seen, you

must know how dearly, how devotedly I—love you.”

He seemed to watch her lips, her every feature for the answer he was about to receive, and his face, hitherto darkened by a heavy expression of anxiety, brightened as he did so. There, on the soft damask cheek a rosy blush was rising (perhaps at her own deceit), and the large splendid eyes were one moment turned on him with a hasty glance of tenderness; bending towards him, as she leaned against a superb chiffonier she said, in a quick broken voice—

“ You surprise, you distress me, in this scene, I cannot—nay, I scarcely know what your lordship means.”

“ Mean ?” he replied, gaining more encouragement from her changing countenance and gentle manner, “ I mean I love you—adore you—that my heart—all I possess when laid at your feet will be too little to give for the love I prize so much.”

Again the Countess faltered in her words.

“Enough,” said she, “no more—we are observed, my lord—I dare not say that I—see me to-morrow—I must leave you now.”

And taking the proffered arm of the Marquis, she walked down the room, and mingled with the dancers.

The last turn of her graceful head had disappeared amidst the brilliant crowd in the furthest drawing-rooms when Cecil Bouverie stepped from behind the crimson satin curtains, which hung over the ottoman the Countess had left, and mechanically looking round the room, seated himself upon it. His face was as pale as ashes, and a dark, heavy frown contracted his brow; as he sat down he pressed his hand heavily against his eyes, and seemed as if striving to recover himself from some strong agitation of mind. He did not appear to heed the busy crowd around him, thought shut out exterior objects from his sight, and yet amidst that throng there was one whose eyes never

moved from gazing at his pale features, whose mouth quivered between a smile and a sneer as he observed him, and this person was Count Auffenberg. But he had little time to scrutinize Cecil, for suddenly the latter rose, and walking with an unequal step through the rooms, passed down the staircase, threw himself into the carriage which was waiting for him, and ordered the coachman to drive home.

Cecil Bouverie heard all that passed between the Countess and her lover,—heard it, and knew himself to have been duped for years by her protestations of affection. For he saw it all now—the tact she displayed in drawing on the confession of the Marquis, the soft, half astonished accents with which she answered his proposal, and the utter absence of feeling she evinced in choosing that time and place for the completion of her plans, all revealed to him her selfishness, her vanity, her deceit. He felt she had never loved him, that it was no pique at his coldness which finally induced her to marry the

Earl, but the vain-glorious desire of becoming the wife of a peer of the realm, of winning the coronet of a Countess, and he perceived the love she acknowledged for him in her youth, after her marriage, even now, was false, most false.

And was this the woman whom he almost worshipped in past years, loved even down to the present time? she, the traitress, who calmly played with the passion she saw he yet felt towards her, and pretended to cherish a regard for him while she was resolving to marry—whom? not one she could love, but one whom she must despise—for Cecil well knew the character of the Marquis. Lady Haviland had deceived him then, as she now deceived her new lover; her smiles and her tears, voice, look, and words were bestowed as easily upon another as upon him—upon him who had loved her from her youth upward, who still loving her after marriage in the dangerous intimacy that ensued between them yet forebore to tempt her

from the faltering path of duty she then pursued towards an unloved and silly husband. She was to him the bright idol of his heart, and he had respected her—respected even the weakness with which he imagined she confessed her love for him, when as a wife she ought to have concealed, and overcome it. Now what thought he of her? He hated the beautiful face where the feelings spoke so falsely, yet so exquisitely; the one loved dream that had lightened his dubious path of life fled, and left hatred and shame behind it; he deemed her worthless—worse than worthless.

Then came the thought that she might have been his wife—his wife! he might have loved her in her beauty and seeming goodness, and never known the black heart within her. But that train of reflection brought on another bitter one, and he thought of Amy—not compassionately or tenderly, but in the same disgust with which he was thinking of the Countess. He classed them together; they



had both deceived him for mercenary motives though in different ways, and at the present moment he hated them both. He was unloved then, alone in his grief and in his rage ; the single, sweet feeling which through years of error and callousness still held possession of his heart had turned to bitterness—was it not right that it should do so ? had it not of late been a guilty one ?

He did not think of that ; he did not enquire whether his punishment was not a just one, he only knew he had sincerely loved the Countess, that she had deceived him, and he felt himself wronged ; wrath, strong bitter wrath possessed him against her, and it was in this mood he entered his home.

## CHAPTER IX.

Awake that strong divinity of soul,  
Which conquers time and fate.

AKENSIDE.

Shall I too weep? where then is fortitude?  
And fortitude abandon'd where is man?

YOUNG.

CECIL BOUVERIE entered his home, his brow frowning darkly and heavily, and his eyes shining with the sullen fire of repressed rage. As the light of the hall lamp gleamed on his livid countenance, the domestic in attendance glanced wonderingly at him, till Cecil taking the light

from his hand sharply bade him leave him, and entered his own room. There the same bitter thoughts pursued him, and more eagerly, for the hurry of his departure from Lady Haviland's, the tramp of his carriage horses, the noise of the wheels, and the tumultuous passions that at first bewildered him, until the present moment, prevented him from thinking or feeling clearly; but now in the quiet surrounding him he became more painfully alive to the treachery of the Countess, and bitterly, deeply did he resent it. The lapse of an hour seemed scarcely felt by him, occupied as he was with his gloomy musings, and it was a long while after the above mentioned portion of time had passed away that he rose from the seat into which he threw himself when he entered the apartment, and moved towards an old Indian cabinet that stood at the farthest end of the room. Thrusting his hand into one of the many drawers it contained, he drew forth some letters, and bringing them to the table began

to peruse them. There was an angry, contemptuous smile upon his lips as he did so ; the pallor of wrath still blanched his brow, the fire of resentment yet sparkled in his eye, and at times that pallor increased, the light of the eye flashed out like a spark of living flame, while his lip quivered as it were with a curse, but still not one spoken word burst from him as paper after paper was perused, crushed by his trembling hand, and cast into the fire at his side. They were the letters of her whom he had loved so long, and so unwisely.

At last from amidst the folds of one of them he drew a small miniature of the Countess, round which a soft, brilliant lock of jet black hair lay curling. He held it up to the lights near him, and ten or twelve minutes elapsed before he turned his eyes from the exquisite features he examined. Earnestly he gazed upon them with a look of intense hatred ; they wore the same pensive look as when Lady Haviland sometimes spoke to him in those

tones of feeling which in past days thrilled to his very heart, and the lips appeared parted, as if even then addressing him gently and tenderly, as they were once wont to do.

For years that picture had been the companion of his lonely hours—he had treasured it, loved it, pressed it to his lips, worn it on his heart, and now—Cecil Bouverie's look increased in bitterness, the flashing of the eye, the curling of the lip, the lowering of the brow, all bespoke the tumult of passion struggling within him, and in the next moment the portrait was on the ground, beneath his foot, crushed to atoms.

He sat down again to finish the perusal of those letters; his was a mind that, however agitated, would sift any scheme of perfidy to the very bottom, and which even at the present moment possessed sufficient self-control to do so; he seemed as if he wished to feel the exact character of the deception the Countess had practised upon him, by contrasting her late

conduct with the vows of affection contained in the epistles before him.

Uninterruptedly he read on till he came to some papers that he did not seem to recognise as belonging to the others, for after he had glanced at them, they were thrown aside. But while in the act of doing so, a tiny bunch of withered flowers fell from within them, and a few of their dried leaves scattered themselves over his hand. The touch of those faded blossoms apparently surprised him, for he took up the papers again, paused over and opened them. Rapidly his eye scanned a page or two of the writing inscribed thereon, till gradually his face assumed an expression of strong interest, and bending over the leaves before him, he pushed aside the letter he had just laid down. He seemed to read so quickly so eagerly, that more than once he leaned back in his chair as if his senses were bewildered by the haste with which he applied himself to his task, then as hurriedly he resumed it. A pale tinge of crim-

son came to his colourless cheek, as he read on, while at times, oppressed as it were with some exquisitely painful thought, he drew a deep breath, and his hand trembled, yet it did not seem with anger, for though the brow was contracted, the darker lines which marked it had vanished; the wrath that possessed him appeared passing away beneath the influence of a gentler but still saddening emotion.

And what so strangely altered the character of his present musings? Cecil Bouverie was reading the leaves of a journal which seemed to have been kept by Amy during the period of her residence at the castle, and it was the feeling of knowing he had been loved by one woman at least devotedly, disinterestedly—it was a belief in the sincerity of his wife's affection that now caused the agitation he felt.

This journal appeared to have been irregularly written; for now and then he could perceive the lapse of a week had sometimes taken place between the different facts and reflec-



tions noted down within, yet still there was sufficient connection between the different parts so as to enable him to form a correct idea of the state of Amy's heart at that time. Sometimes he met with hasty wishes, passionate exclamations, reflections upon himself as hastily written, and seemingly by the tone of the immediate lines beneath them as hastily retracted. Then came a long, bitter train of thoughts, written perhaps in a quieter hour, when the whole view of her misery pressed heavily on her mind, and wrought itself out in mild but heart-breaking complaints ; afterwards came the wild yearnings of a heart repulsed from the affection it sought by coldness or contempt—prayers for patience—happiness—death, till apparently her passionate vehemence of feeling was subdued by gentler thoughts, and she bent meekly to her fate, and tried to hope for better days, tried to hope her husband's love might yet be hers.

Many of her inconsistencies of conduct

were there explained; the anger she usually gave way to before Cecil, her change of conduct, fitful weariness of spirit, and the meeting with Herbert at the ruins, in which she blamed herself for not having restrained her emotion more fully before him, and letting him suspect that her husband was unkind to her—speaking of the former meanwhile with an affection which Cecil now plainly saw was not love. Upon another subject too, Cecil Bouverie was obliged to put faith in Amy's assurances of her ignorance of the real truth of the matter, and that was the relationship existing between Sir Arthur and herself—the few words she overheard her father utter to Howitt in the flower-garden, his agitation at the breakfast-table, the scene in the library, and the old servant's own mysterious method of addressing her were examined and reflected upon in the papers he held in his hand, and he saw she had not had at that time the slightest suspicion of either of her parents being yet alive.

Cecil Bouverie read through this journal to the very end, and when his eyes had glanced the last lines, he still bent forward, his chin leaning upon his hand, pursuing the thoughts which its perusal awakened within him. He was thinking of his own harshness towards Amy just after their marriage, when with a little gentleness he might have moulded her to his will, of her well-founded jealousy of Lady Haviland, her last appeal to his indulgence, his disbelief of all her assertions of innocence concerning the deception he had charged her with, and her agony as they parted. Then again her recognition of him but a few months back, at Wilverton, recurred to his memory—their meeting at Richmond, and lastly, her and her father's firm refusal to accept of any assistance from him. The tones of her voice, the expression of her countenance at each of these different times came to his remembrance, and seemed to stamp the words she then uttered with the seal of truth. Yes, she

had loved him, he felt that now, and as his eyes opened to the truth, he easily excused the inconsistencies of character which her excitability of temper hurried her into when hurt by his indifference.

And did Cecil gain the knowledge of Amy's true affection for him without experiencing a sense of sorrow and of shame that he had been so blinded against believing in its existence? No, lingeringly but surely increasing in strength as each moment flew on, the, at first, slightly unquiet pangs of conscience deepened into absolute pain; surprise and regret grew into compassion if not tenderness, and before he again moved from the position which he had assumed when the strong spells of thought came upon him, he resolved that Amy should return to the home he so unjustly and harshly forced her to leave. He scarcely thought of his uncle, he cared not that Amy was Sir Arthur's daughter, now he knew she had not participated in his schemes, and he did

not once think of her leaving him. He felt she was his own, and he determined to have her with him to efface, if possible, the remembrance of his past unkindness from the mind of the only being who had truly loved him.

Truly loved him! those words brought back the remembrance of her who was trying so perfidiously to deceive him, and once more the cold, terrible, white wrath spread over his cheek and brow; but this time he seemed to check it, and as if wishing to complete the involuntary contrast which presented itself to his mind between his wife's conduct and that of Lady Haviland, desiring to know more of Amy than he yet knew, Cecil again went to the India cabinet to see whether he had left any of the leaves of her journal there, for he thought he might not have gathered up all its detached pieces in the haste with which he took Lady Haviland's letters from thence. But how Amy's writings were placed amongst his own papers was a mystery to him, until notic-

ing the peculiar make of the cabinet he recollected having formerly seen it in his wife's dressing-room, and knew he had not used it till very lately as a repository for his own manuscripts and books. Taking therefore the light with him to the drawer in which he found them, he perceived it was a deep one, and imagined that the journal if thrust back to its furthest end might have hitherto easily escaped his observation.

This he concluded must have been the case, and satisfied with the probability of the idea, he did not dwell long upon it, but eagerly pursued his search after the missing pages of Amy's journal, till with a feeling of disappointment he felt convinced there were no more. Just, however as Cecil was about to turn back again towards the table, he discerned a little gilt knob at the extreme end of the drawer, and knowing such an old piece of furniture might contain many secret recesses, he tried to make it yield beneath his touch. It did not

do so immediately, but upon his pressing it more heavily, part of the wood to which it was attached flew aside with a sudden spring, and showed a long, narrow space, in which a roll of paper seemed carefully laid.

This Cecil supposed was what he wanted, and bringing it to the table, he opened it.

His eyes first settled on it with a glance of examination then with a look of astonishment and scrutiny; five or six minutes afterwards his countenance changed fearfully, and laying down the paper he was reading, he passed his hand over his brow with the air of a man bewildered with some sudden shock. Again he turned to look upon it, and his large, dark hazel eyes were almost hidden beneath the contraction of the heavy eyebrow, while his lips became compressed and white. What new astonishment had seized him? were the revelations of that eventful night still unfinished? was another yet brought to light? Even so!



Beneath the cold damp hand of Cecil Bouverie, rested a document, which at once deprived him of every remaining inducement to cling to the life before him. The old yellow parchment that lay there, was a will of his grandfather's, made after the one, by which Cecil at present held possession of the Bouverie estates; it entirely revoked the former's harsh restrictions, and settled the whole property unconditionally upon his elder son Arthur. And Cecil knew himself no longer the rightful heir of the Bouverie property; he was comparatively beggared—penniless.

A thousand thoughts of anguish filled his mind, which at that moment appeared, even to himself, as giving way beneath the conflicting shocks it had sustained during the night. He leaned back in his chair; he tried to collect his ideas—he could not do so; tumultuously and promiscuously they thronged his brain—good and evil ones struggling against each other—he had no power to control them, and he aban-

doned the attempt as useless. The hour of trial had at last come—the bitter moment, when he was to feel the same temptings that one whom he had crushed, spurned, and never forgiven—felt it seized him, when the strength of his mind was relaxed, when it was all but defenceless to their attacks—would he stand firmly? shrink from it? or fall beneath them?

Evil thoughts come to us and tempt us, but so that their visits are unsought for, so that they do not linger with us, they scarcely leave but a perishing taint behind them; it is only when they are encouraged, that they degrade us. Who has not heard the voice of evil tempting him, sometimes in the soft insidious whispers of persuasion, under the guise of truth, tenderness, or worldly wisdom; at others, speaking in the hurried rush of the passions? Who has not fallen, when he has dared to listen to it yearningly, lingeringly? Strong must his mind be, who dallies with the thought, and yet

withholds himself from the deed—few can do so, none ought to try so to do, for, by this dallying, they weaken the mental strength that makes them forbear; corrupt the spring from whence their actions flow, and in the end they are sure to fall. The voice of temptation grows stronger and stronger, the longer we hear it, and at length we bend to its behests, bend, enslaved by our own weakness or presumption, in listening to the sophistries it speaks.

Cecil Bouverie listened to it now.

He thought of the uncle who, he felt, had loved him as a child, whatever were his faults; he thought that the last time he looked upon his countenance, his own words added to the anguish and the shame depicted there; he did not see the sufferings of years, written upon his pale, worn brow, and he crushed the stricken spirit yet lower in the dust, threw back his child, whom he had wedded, to his protection,

and thrust them both from the home, which once was theirs.

“Theirs,” murmured Cecil, half aloud, “even so! as they both passed the threshold of that door, as outcasts from it, it was their own—not mine!”

But he thought again:—

“Sir Arthur knew not of the later will then, and he must yet stand in the same guilty light to himself and to the world; yes, the will could not remove his former guilt, still, on that point, he remained inexcusable—was he so on the score of forcing him to marry his daughter?”

Cecil Bouverie now saw that Amy had loved him, even as her father said she did, and he also knew the latter was aware of it at the time, and thus made him marry her, more from feelings of resentment at his conduct in having idly gained her affections, than from mercenary motives. Cecil felt the punishment

a just one for his own heartlessness, though it came from the hand of a guilty man—and he censured not his uncle so severely there. But was it to this uncle, who had acted so treacherously towards him in one instance, whom he spurned from his presence, with words which could not be forgotten or forgiven—was it to this uncle that the wealth he had called his own, and which he spent as such, was to pass?

Cecil hurried over the thought; he dared not cope with its bitterness just then.

And his mind dwelt upon Amy. Amy, who faultless in most respects, he now knew loved him with true affection—whom he had humbled so cruelly, to a sense of her inferiority of rank and birth—whose heart he wrung with his coldness and indifference. He had still before him her dark, melancholy eyes, where the feelings seemed half subdued, half revealed; he saw her as she parted with

him, when the last look of hopeless anguish settled on her countenance; he recollected the silent despair, with which she sank at his feet and thanked him for her life, at Richmond; her quiet control of feeling, in forbearing to notice the connexion between them; and his wish to have her near him, increased in strength and earnestness. He would have cherished her, loved her, as the only being who had yet loved him; those bright eyes, he said, should meet his, divested of the fear that ever shone there; the false one, who had turned him from her, should be forgotten, and he would yet be happy—happy! Is happiness so easily attained on earth?

These, these were wild imaginings. Cecil soon knew them to be such and they fell to the ground.

“Whom was he to seek?” he asked himself—“the loving, the poor, the heart-broken one, whom he could raise to happiness, to

wealth? No, no, Amy was no longer dependent on him—she was the daughter of the rich uncle he had spurned in his anger even as he did her, and he thought that if he sought her now she might justly repulse him with contempt, for were he to do so it must be as a suppliant on her father's bounty, as if he used her affection for him but as a means of procuring part of those riches which were now no longer his. Nor dared he ask her to share his poverty with him, because there was selfishness in that thought; Amy's love then Cecil saw he could not try for, although at present he knew its worth, and prized it well.

Hope passed away from Cecil Bouverie's bosom; Amy, who he, a few moments before almost felt his own, seemed now separated from him for ever—now when the heart-sickening feeling of desolation came over him, now when he knew he must wander through life a bankrupt in love, wealth, everything! And his spirits sank, his heart swelled within him, for



he thought he could never retrieve his neglect of her, never, never redeem the past. Cecil Bouverie at that moment loved the wife who had loved him ; men do not begin to think kindly of their wives (if they happen to dislike them) till they have no other persons to think kindly of themselves.

In that moment of weakness, when awakening, love for Amy unnerved the pride which had hitherto held him up, the voice of evil rose amidst the better feelings which were gathering within him, and tempted him the more insiduously because it partly spoke with their accents. What said it? It whispered Amy loved him, that wealth was nothing in her eyes in comparison with his affection, told him he might win her yet, and make her happy if he could destroy that will—the existence of which he alone knew. It told him he need not then bend before the uncle he despised, or fly his country to escape the consequences the reckless way of living in which he had alone found

pleasure since his marriage would bring upon him. The lights in the room were burnt down—heavy shadows gloomed through it, the air seemed hot and oppressive and the fire upon the hearth alone cast up a fitful flame—a flame that was ready to consume the shrivelled piece of parchment whose existence made him penniless—he was alone with his own dark thoughts and the tempter in his bosom.

Cecil Bouverie imaged forth in thought the execution of these evil suggestions, although he never resolved to work out their reality; in thought he saw their completion. He felt Amy his own again; her bright smiles and loving look were his; wealth, wealth was around him, wealth, joy and happiness—past sorrow was forgotten, the deed which so suddenly changed his future life appeared to throw no shadow over it as yet, and his hand was stretched forth upon the parchment by his side, and he glanced towards the fire flickering in the grate.

But with a sudden shiver and a start Cecil

Bouverie at that moment rose from his chair, averted his look from the table where the will yet lay, and walking towards one of the windows through the closed shutters of which he saw the daylight struggling, he hastily opened them, and threw up the sash. It was broad sunrise; without a keen sharp morning air travelled freshly over the park, and now fanned his heated brow while it brought a more life-like colour to his livid complexion. He leaned against the window frame, and his heavy eyelids drooped over the dimmed yet restless eye, it seemed to him that his mind and body were strengthened, refreshed—the power of evil had waned within his heart.

Still he had felt the bitterness of the temptation; which his own guilty weakness in encouraging the erring dreams of his imagination brought upon him. The re-action, indeed, of the better principle within him awoke him to the sense of what he might have committed, and its efforts attended as they were by

the instant and acquiescent movement of the will saved him. But what caused it so to spring to life at the very last moment when his integrity of mind was fallen, shaken? What but the power of the Holy One speaking in a heart not wholly lost. He could not then have stood by his own strength, because he had voluntarily weakened it—weakened it by the indulgence with which he had listened to the first suggestions of evil.

And the daylight, the glorious daylight streamed through the window, and tinged the eastern heavens with a rosy hue, and with his arms folded over his breast, Cecil Bouverie, the sleepless one, still gazed upon the surrounding grounds, seeking, perhaps, in the scene before him that health of mind, which, during the past night had forsaken him. A flush of shame was on his broad, high forehead, of shame that he had so far fallen as to give place to the base thoughts which almost urged him to accomplish a deed of dishonour—and, in his own opinion, he was no longer the impeccable, the high-

mind—Cecil thought of the uncle whom he had so nearly imitated with an irritating consciousness of being himself scarcely removed from his guilt, and he dared not censure him severely now. He could have wept hot tears of shame had he been one to weep, but his stern, cold pride held him impervious to such weakness—to many a one that perhaps it would have been better for him to have felt.

At length Cecil Bouverie walked from the window near which he stood, and passing to the others opened them also. Merrily the wind, the breezy wind blew in, and shining with a pleasant light the morning sunbeams entered the apartment; then for the first time for many an hour did Cecil look around it. The broken fragments of Lady Haviland's miniature were sparkling on the floor, her letters disturbed by the breeze fluttered here and there, and her long, glossy lock of hair lay gleaming in the light. Cecil was calmer now; stepping towards the broken pieces of the portrait he gathered them in his hand, and without a look

cast them into the fire, while the letters and hair shared the same fate. Amy's journal he raised from the table, and for one moment pressed it to his lips, while over his cheek there grew a faint red flush, as if the proud man even then felt half ashamed of that silent act of tenderness. He looked too at the faded knot of flowers, and although he knew not what sweet thought was attached to it, placed it carefully with the manuscript in the drawer where he found them.

The last article on which his attention rested was the will ; this he instantly sealed up, and directed to his solicitor with a note explanatory of the whole affair, and instructions to forward it to Sir Arthur within a week. Urged, too, by his pride which would not suffer him to bend the neck to the uncle he despised, he also enclosed in the same parcel a renunciation of the property the latter settled upon him at the time his marriage.

The sacrifice was complete—justice satisfied,

and with a sigh of relief Cecil Bouverie turned from the table, lay down on the sofa near him, let the cool breeze play upon his burning temples, and tried to sleep. And he slept—the sun had already mounted high in the heavens—the night of trial was past!



## CHAPTER X.

Tu ne remportais pas une grande victoire  
Perfide, en abusant ce cœur pré-occupé  
Qui lui-meme craignait de se voir détrompé.

\* \* \* \*

Laissez moi le plaisir de confondre l'ingrat  
Je veux voir son desordre et jouir de sa honte  
Je perdrais ma vengeance en la rendant si prompte  
Je vais tout preparer.

BAJAZET-RACINE.

Where shall I turn ? a wanderer and alone ?

SAVAGE.

WHEN a man is betrayed by a woman he loves,  
he generally seeks her presence and stormily  
upbraids her with her treachery ; a woman in  
the like case shuns the false one, and shuts up

her grief and anger is her own heart. Yet falsehood under the appearance of truth asserts the contrary, maintaining that tears, reproaches and lamentations are the characteristic signs of woman's sorrow; but it is not so—when her grief is deep it is speechless. A woman's spirit is stricken by a cold, calm, keen despair when she becomes aware of the perfidy of one she loves; she never vents her anguish of mind in words, she broods over it in silence, dead alike to hope, to pleasure—but alive to pain. A man on the contrary spends his rage and partly assuages his grief in violent upbraidings.

Cecil Bouverie was not one to forgive an injury easily, particularly where he perceived it was of a deliberate or perfidious character, and on the present occasion he chose to see Lady Haviland in order to reproach her with her conduct towards him.

He imagined her own hardened conscience would not sufficiently upbraid her with it, and so he determined that his lips should. He did

not shrink from the scene which he knew would follow his reproaches—there are some men who do not care to weather a storm so that they gain their ends.

It was then in a spirit of cool yet bitter anger that Cecil mounted his horse and rode to Lady Haviland's upon the morning of the very day on which he found the will. A sleepless night, and the different emotions he had lately passed through gave an almost death-like appearance to his features; but no other outward sign of agitation did he betray, and calmly he entered the house, and even the drawing-room where the Countess sat.

Lady Haviland on his entrance rose with the greeting of a friend, and held out her hand to him. Cecil Bouverie turned aside, and did not speak; for he could not at that moment address her as coldly as he desired to do, the strong wrath of an injured man was rising within him, and he wished to conquer it before he broke the silence which existed between

them. The Countess looked surprised at the strangeness of his manner and the pallor of his countenance, and the stern expression of his eye, as it was for a moment bent on hers, struck her with a sudden fear that he had heard of or guessed her engagement with the Marquis.

“Your visit is an early one,” at last she said, and a slight paleness overspread her beautiful cheek, “your visit is an early one, why are you come hither so soon, Cecil? why are you so silent?”

These were the first questions that presented themselves to her mind, and ere she was aware of it she uttered them.

Cecil Bouverie turned round, glanced sharply at her, and then answered—

“I came here thus early because I wished to see you alone, to tell you—” he stopped short.

“Not any ill news I hope,” said Lady Haviland, “and yet your appearance suggests as much?”

“ Ill news to you perhaps, good news to me, for it frees me from the power of falsehood,” returned Cecil, rising and walking up to her side, “ Ellen, can you not guess what it is?”

And he laid his hand heavily upon her shoulder, and looked downwards into her splendid eyes, which were upturned towards his with a wondering look of curiosity.

“ I cannot,” the Countess replied, while the quick fear she felt when he first entered the room increased. “ I dislike enigmas—but you look ill,” she added, “ has anything happened to distress you?”

He was silent, gazing at her still with that same fixed look.

“ What is the matter?” continued she, and her voice trembled, for now a yet stranger idea than the former one entered her mind, “ is your uncle—your wife—ill—dead?”

A shock, sudden and powerful as an electric one, seemed to thrill Cecil Bouverie’s frame as

she pronounced the last words, and he turned hastily from her.

“ Ill—dead !” he murmured, “ God forbid !”

“ Then,” said Lady Haviland, still more anxiously, “ then what is it that so disturbs you ?”

Few were the bitter words Cecil Bouverie spoke in reply ; but they fully told her all he knew of her falsehood, and starting from the sofa on which she sat, she clasped her hands together in astonishment, a sudden paleness spread over her cheek, and her lip quivered ; yet she did not attempt to refute his accusations ; she was speechless.

“ I know all, and I loathe you,” continued Cecil, as with an increasing gloom upon his brow, a flashing light in his dark eye, he watched the effect the intelligence had upon her. “ I know all, I tell you—your hypocritical pretences of affection, your mercenary falsehoods, and the lies, the lies wherewith you

have deceived me—lower than the lowest of your sex I despise you,—you whom I once loved.”

“Be silent!” he added, as he saw she was about to speak, “I will listen to no defence of your conduct, can you make one? no, you must listen to me, hear all I have to say—hear yourself described in your true colours. I hate you; the remembrance of past years is torture to me—those years in which I dreamed you loved me—Loved me, did I say? you never loved—you sought me only for my wealth, and because the Earl had more you married him—and now you wed an idiot for the same reasons. I have been your dupe these many years—loving you—esteeming you, as better than myself—than many others; but bad as I am you are worse, for the man who loved you as his own soul you have deceived, deceived him twice, thrice, and in your utter selfishness, calmly, perfidiously encouraged his affection, taught his heart to centre its yet remaining



tenderness on you; to wither it in after years with the knowledge of your worthlessness and treachery. Unloved by any one save you, as I thought myself to be I cherished the heart I imagined you gave me, as the only one that could sympathize with mine. Ellen, it was black with deceit, guilt, utterly detestable—and now it is fully detested!”

Lady Haviland seemed stricken speechless, she had enough of love to feel the stinging bitterness of his words, enough of shame to remain silent.

“You do not speak,” continued Cecil, glancing at her, “why not? yours is not a tongue that will falter in a lie—yours is not the heart to feel the bitterness of the words I speak. Come to me then as you once did, raise your eyes to mine with the seeming glance of innocence, pour forth the music of your voice—shed tears—the hypocrite’s tears—come!—no, no, come not near me now, for I could strike you to the earth, Ellen—were death’s hand

upon us both, I could not forgive you, I could not pity you. Yet tell me," he added, in a calmer tone, "on your life, on your soul, why have you deceived me thus?—for years,—tell me at once?"

But Lady Haviland was still silent, for the suddenness of the discovery had confused her, and left her without a word of defence before Cecil's anger.

"Have you no voice? shame cannot keep you silent—you have none, or long ago," added he, "you would have repented your falsehood, your worthlessness. Speak, Ellen! I will know—why have you thus cajoled me?"

There was an effort on Lady Haviland's part to reply, a strong effort, and at last, in a low, hollow voice, she answered him:—

"I have loved you," she uttered slowly—"selfishly it may be—sordidly too—but I have loved you!"

"No, never," he rejoined, "do not profane

the word by using it—loved! while my heart was wholly yours, you were plotting to betray me; when I shunned you, that the love of my childhood, youth, and manhood, might die, you re-lit it, for the gratification of your own selfish vanity, when I married—and my own pride estranged me from the wife I ought to have loved, you separated me yet further from her—taught me yet more bitterly to crush, humble, despise her; you made me hate the home, I otherwise might have found a peaceful one—could love wreak such misery, teach such selfishness as that? You desecrated my hearth, by making it the hearth of the heart-broken, the unloved one—brought a curse there; but that curse will come back to you, deceiver, it will darken your path, as it must darken mine, for ever!”

Until then, the Countess had borne all his reproaches in silence, a sense of her own guilt, a remaining feeling of shame, prevented her speaking; his last words, however, seemed to

hint at awakening love for Amy, and while her dark eyes flashed forth a wrathful light, with a feeling of ireful jealousy, she answered:—

“ I brought no curse to your hearth—it was in the heart of the wife, whom you married against your will—did I teach her to deceive you?”

Cecil Bouverie turned quickly round.

“ Do not speak of her,” he said, and his pale cheek blanched to a livid hue, “ do not utter her name ; from your lips I will not hear it—but know she never deceived me—know that her heart was as true to me, as yours was false, and I—”

“ Love her, seek her, will be happy with her !” interrupted the Countess, “ that is what you would say. Has she, then, at last won you, with her false gentleness? Are you fool enough to believe her? She is more false than I am ; I, at least, loved you, though I wedded another—she never did ! Is it come to this? Is she the beloved, I the hated ?

And they will be happy," added she, as she passed her hand wildly over her brow, and I must be forgotten, despised by the only one I ever loved! Yes," she continued, glancing up at Cecil, "I did love you—my haughty spirit, indeed, would not bow to yours, and thus I refused you; yet I did love you, and loving you, chose to live your heart's idol, rather than an obedient—perhaps a despised wife!"

"You chose to live a hypocrite towards your husband, towards me; you chose to darken your own heart with the black guilt of perfidy," replied Cecil.

The Countess looked up, with a lip white with anger.

"Need you complain?" she said, "you have your wife's affection to fall back upon—that little trembler will forgive you, no doubt—perhaps, indeed, for the sake of enjoying the riches you possess; but still, she will forgive you."

She was watching him keenly, for in the

strong whirlwind of jealousy, which was sweeping over her heart, she wished her words to sting him—and they did—not, however, in the manner she thought they would. An expression of deep pain passed hastily across his features; for he knew Amy's disinterestedness, and also felt every chance of a reconciliation between them was at an end.

“You speak to a poor man,” he said, “and not to a rich one.”

Lady Haviland started.

“A poor man?” echoed she.

“Yes,” he replied, almost fiercely, “I am ruined, in debt, suddenly beggared, and in five or six days, I leave England for ever.”

Lady Haviland turned towards him with a wondering look, and a cheek much paler than before. Selfish as she was, she could not but feel a pang, when she thought another severe misfortune was added to the one her own

treachery had inflicted on Cecil, and she said, hurriedly:—

“This is not true—this cannot be true.”

“Not true?” returned Cecil, “when you hear that I have fled England, when the curse of a lonely, unforgiven, unforgiving man, clings to you, then know it to be so; then let the hour of remorse come upon you, as it has come upon me, and wring your heart, as it has wrung mine—for this, all this, has been in part your work. But you, you will not feel it,” he added, with increased bitterness—“you are callous in everything—you will be callous to the last!”

A slight tremor shook Lady Haviland’s hand, as it lay upon the table near her.

“How, how have I done this?” she asked.

“By severing me from the love of her, who might have redeemed me—who would do so even now, were I to seek her presence,” answered Cecil.



“ Then why do you not ? ” rejoined the Countess, her angry passions again arising, at the mention of Amy, and, with a sneer, she watched Cecil’s countenance, for she saw from his manner, that there was some obstacle to his doing so, although she could not understand what it could be, “ why do you not ? ”

“ Why ? ” replied Cecil, “ because I will not beg where I have given, sue where I have commanded—the Bouverie property is rightfully Sir Arthur’s after all, and therefore I am ruined ; he and I are, and would have been estranged for ever, even without this last misfortune, but Amy—no, I will not speak of her, too many bitter feelings will mingle with the utterance of her name ; yet was it for you the false one, the hypocrite, that I despised her ? cast away the heart whose worth I knew not, trampled on its purest feelings, rent asunder all the ties which bound us together, left her to live, sorrow, love, in the home where she never

received one kind word, that to her could be but full of bitter recollections; for spirit-stricken, heart-broken, she dwelt there alone, alone in the utter helplessness of her desolation. Dark with the sullen fire of repressed, yet bitter jealousy did the large eyes of the Countess become as she listened to Cecil Bouverie's words, and her brow grew black beneath the shadows of the evil passions seated within her heart. She had listened to his reproaches, she had borne his anger quietly, patiently for a woman of her proud temperament because she felt she deserved his contempt, his hatred, and the sudden discovery of her deceit held her mute and almost shamed her into repentance, just then too she had no time to reason away her guilt even to herself with any of her usual skill. Lady Haviland also felt Cecil's present position—his fall from wealth to poverty, but when she thought of its possible remedy her lip and cheek whitened with anger, and her humbled spirit aroused itself to one of its stormiest moods.

The Countess could not bear to think of the chance of a reconciliation between Cecil and his wife, or listen to his words which half expressed a strong affection for her, and she no longer heard his reproaches in silence. Momentary shame and awakened feeling were all lost in the bitter hatred she felt for Amy, and proudly and cuttingly at length she answered him.

“ Spirit-stricken, heart-broken,” repeated she with a sneering laugh, “ truly she seemed so! The gayest of the gay, her love no doubt taught her to be so, rejected love teaches us light spirits, fair smiles, and fairer words! Her unhappiness will not weigh heavily on my mind—scarcely so much as yours, sir; neither will make a deep impression on it since I see how matters stand. You speak to me as if I alone were to be reproached with the sufferings, unmerited of course, of this model of a wife—this modern Griselda—reproach yourself, judge if your offences weigh not as heavily against her

as mine do. You say I profaned the altar with false vows for gold,—and you stand there a hypocrite as well as I? did not you taunt me with selfishly encouraging a passion that I did not return; and pray what line of conduct did you pursue before marriage, towards the woman you now pretend to love? By your own confession you trifled with her affections when a simple country girl, for the gratification of your selfish vanity. I give you back your own words, sir,—you trifled with her affections never intending to requite them—your heartlessness is very much beyond mine, if heartlessness you call it—I loved you, and my feelings towards you were true, though I sacrificed them for wealth and honours—did not you the same?”

Cecil Bouverie turned towards her.

“I scarcely reproach you, more than I reproach myself,” he said, “but you are shameless, execrable in thus defending yourself.”

“Not so!” she replied, a wild light sparkling up in her dilated eyes, “I feel the shame

of what I have done, I shrink beneath your taunts—I am not utterly devoid of feeling though you think me so. I know what I am better than you do—I hate your wife—I love you, and loving you would ask forgiveness for the misery I have caused, were she not concerned in the matter, and were it probable you would forgive me. I do not, because I know it would but draw down a bitterer curse upon me; I do not, because though your curse may cling to me, bring misery on me; yet at the same time it will tell me you are not loved by the wife whom you now grieve after—and that will be happiness—in pain, grief, that will be happiness to me! I would rather your curse than your forgiveness, if with the former you remained unloved.”

Again Cecil Bouverie fixed a look of deep abhorrence upon her.

“And you,” he murmured, and he shuddered at the very thought, “you might have been my wife.”

“And if I had?” replied the Countess with a darker brow for she well understood the feelings which urged him to utter those few words, “if I had, I should scarcely have proved more of a deceiver than your present wife is—bound by interest as she has been with her father, how can you prove her ignorance of the past? her love for you? Tricked by a knave and his daughter into a trap of their own making—you are a fool if you believe either the one or the other.”

Cecil bit his lip.

“Let me hear no more of this, let us part,” he said, “I came to tell you that I knew your perfidy—I have done so, and I now leave you to commune with your own dark heart. I give you my curse, my everlasting contempt—”

“And what more?” interrupted the Countess, with a frenzied glance of anger; “what more?”

He drew closer to her, he fixed his eyes on hers; she never lowered them, never shrunk from the bitter look of wrath then given her,

and in a low deep voice of constrained passion he answered, "My very hatred—let all that is evil cling to you, darken your path, scathe your heart, and when that heart is seared as it will be, must be, some day by the remembrance of the woe you have worked, when you would crave for the forgiveness of the merest child you had offended—then feel I have not forgiven you—never will—on my deathbed, in my dying agony, I will not—let me pass?"

But pale as death with one white arm extended as if to prevent his exit from the room, the Countess stood before him, and her features seemed more like those of a corpse than of a living being.

"You leave England," at length she said, "alone—poor—you think me utterly false—I am not—I will give up rank, fortune; I will go with you!"

One moment Cecil Bouverie stayed to bend a withering look of scorn on her—one moment he shrank back from her, as if she had been



some vile reptile in his path, then passed her, and left the apartment without another look, another word.

Thought had wrought itself to madness in the brain of Lady Haviland ; Cecil's last words had stung through the selfishness which enveloped her heart, and urged it—not to redeem itself, but to speak the words she uttered, to sink yet lower in the path of sin ; for the feelings with which she then addressed him, though so far good, inasmuch as they sprang in the first place from a sense of remorse, became guilt, when they took the line of action above expressed. The best feelings of our natures sometimes become guilty ones, if evil suggestions wrongly direct them, and they soon appear corrupt in their tendencies, though at their birth they were intrinsically good.

And thus it was with Lady Haviland, and bitterly did she feel it when Cecil's last look dwelt contemptuously upon her. She read the

full measure of her guilt in that one glance ; pride, shame, and remorse tortured her heart with their conflicting pangs, and she stood for five or six minutes on the spot where he had parted from her utterly bewildered with the violence of her emotions—hating, loving, grieving—grieving over what ? her own treachery, her own shame, her self-wrought misery. There seemed a dry, brilliant light in the flashing eye, no tears ; but a burning blush was upon her cheek, and her beautiful face appeared distorted with passion ; her temples throbbed, her bosom heaved, and her hands were clasped together so tightly that their passionate pressure made the blue veins start out upon her neck and arms. Thus the Countess grieved ; bitterly, yet not with a woman's tenderness—passionately, yet more in anger than in love.

On the same evening Cecil Bouverie trod the different apartments of the Castle for the last time ere he quitted England, as he had

determined to leave Wiltshire that very night. His thoughts were sad and bitter enough as he passed through them, for Bouverie Castle had been the home of his boyhood, youth, and manhood—and now he felt he might never visit it again. One whom he once hated, whom he now loved, would soon tread its halls as their mistress, call them her home—yet he felt it would be a desolate one to her even—as it had been to him with all his pride, all his anger. And loving he must leave her, leave her though he knew she loved him—it was the proud man's only line of conduct to pursue—Cecil would have bent in spirit to the woman he loved; but not to the uncle he despised. Then came the thought, too, that possibly to her, a wish for reconciliation on his part would seem to arise from mercenary considerations, and he repressed the sudden hopes which sprang up within his heart, and wandered through the rooms with a cold feeling of despair.

He gazed at the old faded portraits of the

picture gallery, as at kind, familiar friends whom he might never meet again; he turned into the library, into the drawing-rooms where the echo of Amy's laugh, and voice had sounded, where her smiles had shone, and he lingered there amidst the dusky shadows of the evening musing on his past life, and on his future. Away, away from all that he loved; in a strange land he knew he should live—perhaps, die—die, unmourned by her, unwept.

He had caused her to shed bitter tears; but tears would not then flow for him, he thought their source would dry, her love would cease, she would live quietly—perhaps, not happily—yet still in peace, and he would be forgotten. Forgotten! man cannot fathom the depth of a woman's love, and never will.

Forgotten! he looked up at that thought—he looked up, and saw the fair, pale face of his wife close to him. Partly hidden by the large draperies of the window, at his side hung a large portrait of Amy taken during her residence

in Wiltshire, and now Cecil Bouverie stood before it glancing upwards in some surprise. He knew the picture well, and also the time of its execution; but he had not looked upon it since he and Amy parted, for during Kate's first visit to the Castle after their separation, he desired her to have it placed in an apartment where it might not obtrude upon his notice, and accordingly his sister carried it into one of the smaller sitting-rooms, which during her visits to her brother she more particularly called her own. And there it still hung, and to this room Cecil Bouverie had unconsciously wandered at the present time.

That childish face! with its exquisite smile playing round the little lips, the large, dark, melancholy eyes, the white, pure forehead, the golden hair—it recalled her to his mind in her earlier days—the days when she dreamed she was beloved—not, not as he had lately seen her, care-worn and ill—the sweet smile gone, the fair cheek faded, the eyes—no, they were

bright and glorious as they had ever been, although the glancing tears shone in them bespeaking the heart's anguish—Cecil Bouverie linger not to look longer upon that portrait, linger not to think, or thine own tears will flow, too!

And they did flow,—swelling slowly in the dry dim eye, they shed a sparkling sheet of light over its whole surface, and wetted the cheek which not for many a year had been so moistened by them. Painfully they gathered—painfully they fell—striving not to yield to the weakness that he felt stealing over him—Cecil moved away from the picture which thus affected him; but he turned from thence but to return—to gaze, to linger again and again, till at length pride gave way before affection, and as flow a child's tears so flowed his.

An hour afterwards, when the moon was mounting the heights of the calm blue heavens, Cecil Bouverie left the home of his forefathers. Afar in the distance, as he travelled towards

London, he saw the turrets of the Castle gleaming in the pale moonbeams through the dark green foliage of the trees—and when those turrets, when that old familiar scene vanished from his view, then for the first time he truly felt he was a wanderer bound for distant lands—a wanderer and alone!



## CHAPTER XI.

MAN. My injuries came down on those who loved me—

. . . . .

ABBOT This should have been a noble creature : he  
Hath all the energy which would have made  
A goodly frame of glorious elements,  
Had they been wisely mingled.

. . . . .

he will perish,  
And yet he must not.

BYRON.

ABOUT a fortnight after Cecil Bouverie's departure from the Castle, a travelling carriage

rapidly entered Paris, and turning towards the Place Vendôme, its occupants, who consisted of two ladies and a gentleman, put up at one of the hotels there. They were Sir Arthur Bouverie, and his niece and daughter.

Soon after their arrival in the French metropolis, the cousins entered another vehicle hired for the occasion, and driving quickly towards the Rue St. Thomas du Louvre, alighted at the Porte cochere of a large inn, situated within its narrow precincts.

"This must be the house," said Kate, as taking Amy's arm, she hurried into the inner court, to escape the stares of half-a-dozen gentlemen, who were loitering in the doorway. "This must be the house, at least, his letter was dated here."

And she asked a waiter, whom she saw hastening towards them, whether a Mr. Bouverie was not one of its inmates.

"*Numero quarante t-un, Mesdames,*" replied

he, "*mais je crois que je l'ai vu entre ici a l'instant.*"

And he opened the coffee-room door.

"Kate," said Amy, and she clung closer to her companion, "Kate, I cannot meet him here—I cannot urge his acceptance of my father's offer in a public room.

"There is no one with him," returned Kate, glancing into the apartment. "Perhaps," she continued, in a lower voice, and as if it pained her to utter the words she spoke, "perhaps he will not see you, if he knows who you are—enter now—enter, Amy—I will wait for you outside, at the entrance of the street."

And drawing her veil closely down over her face, Kate Bouverie hurried back into the carriage, and in two or three seconds afterwards, Amy stood once more in the presence of her husband.

He was leaning against the fire-place, at the further end of the room, apparently having just risen from a sort of lunch, spread upon the

table before him, and Amy, who knew that if she stayed to think in what way she should address him, thought would only increase the strong emotion she even now felt, directly advanced towards him, with the intention of speaking. But she could not; and with the thick black lace veil, which she had doubled over her face as she entered the hotel, still entirely concealing her features, she stood by his side, perfectly unable to utter one word, oppressed by the many feelings of hope and fear that possessed her.

Cecil, at her first entrance into the apartment, glanced carelessly towards her, without the slightest sign of recognition; he imagined her to be a lady, who entered the room, to wait, during a few minutes, for the promised escort of a husband or brother, and seemingly uninterested in his cursory inspection, again stood silently musing. But, when she closely approached him, when, through the dark folds of the veil, he saw, by the peculiar bend of the

head, that his silent companion's countenance was uplifted towards his own, as if scanning it with an eager glance of enquiry, while the gloved hand trembled, as it held the drapery of a large shawl around her; then a sudden suspicion of the truth was awakened in his mind. His eyes were bent earnestly upon her, and a deep flush mounted to his cheek and brow, till at last, as if almost certain his speechless visitor could be no other than Amy, he turned to leave the room, for he feared the anguish, that the actual knowledge of her presence might awaken in his heart—feared his pride would yield, before the love of her whom he had wronged.

And Amy saw that he partially guessed who she was, saw that he wished to leave her, and thought his old feelings of dislike towards her were yet active in his breast. That reflection brought a feeling of despair to her mind—of despair lest he should again repulse her as harshly as he once did, and rising from her

chair as he moved away, she passionately exclaimed, "Cecil, Mr. Bouverie, will you not hear me for one moment!"

Even a prouder man than Cecil Bouverie could not have resisted that voice whose tones seemed to thrill with suppressed anguish, and Cecil convinced that she was Amy, looked back, perhaps half involuntarily, and stepped towards her. Eagerly she threw back the thick veil which shrouded her features, and earnestly she glanced up in his face.

"I come," said she, "I come from my father—he would—he will—he will give back all—if you will accept it."

At the mention of his uncle's name Cecil Bouverie's brow became dark, and the look, with which he in the first moment greeted Amy, vacillating as it then did between tenderness and pride, grew stern and haughty. He did not answer her, but an expression of surprise evinced itself upon his countenance as he heard her words.

“I come,” continued Amy more firmly, and she strove to restrain the agitation she felt for fear of angering him with any signs of an affection she thought he despised. I come to offer you all you once had, back again. My father says he does not intend to consider it his, as in his own mind he has forfeited all right to it, by that deed which cannot be forgotten. He wants little, very little to live upon, and all the rest may be—must be yours.”

Cecil Bouverie listened to Amy almost incredulously; when however the truth was fully seen in the earnest manner with which she addressed him, his brow flushed to a deep crimson, and he bent his eyes on the floor.

“This then,” he thought, “is the first act of the man whom I deemed too degraded for one noble thought or feeling to linger in his breast, whom I imagined would have harshly made me sue for the riches that have past from me!”

Yet Cecil's spirit could not bend in its haughtiness before this advance of Sir Arthur



towards forgiveness; he felt the generosity of the offer, and perceived it was the last effort of an honourable mind to cleanse itself from a dark stain of dishonour, but pride still kept him silent when, even if he did not accept it, he should have acknowledged the worth of those feelings which had dictated it.

Amy looked up in fear, for this silence on his part distressed her.

“Will you not give me an answer,” she asked tremulously, “will you not speak to me?”

Cecil turned from her, and again walking towards the fire place, leaned against the mantel-piece.

“What can I say?” he replied coldly. “Your father has proved himself better than I thought he was—more generous than he has need to be; but this proposition is an extravagant one, and can scarcely be commented on for one moment.”

“And why not?” returned Amy, “he means it—his only hopes of happiness rest upon your

acquiescing in it—do not then refuse to comply with his wishes, by doing so you will render him more unhappy than he now is, and yourself—”

“Penniless?” interrupted Cecil, “that is what you would say, is it not? What of that? poverty is preferable to a life of dependence—your father and I can never be reconciled. I could not forgive him, nor could he forgive me.”

“He says he has nothing to forgive nor does he hope for your forgiveness,” rejoined Amy, sadly, “he only wishes to retrieve that single error of his life, and you,” she added in tones almost heart-broken, you the injured will not allow him to do so.”

“The injury he did me was an imaginary one,” answered Cecil.

“But my father’s actual intentions were the same,” said Amy, a deep blush of shame rising to her cheeks, “and it is for those he would atone—then do not, do not refuse that which he now offers you.”

“Did he dream I would accept it?” replied Cecil, “he should have known me better than to think I could do so. Perhaps he did,” added he, and his features grew dark with passion, “perhaps he did, and this has been offered me merely to raise himself in the opinion of others, knowing well that I would refuse it.”

Amy burst into tears.

‘No, no, do not say that,” she exclaimed, “he feels he is sunk for ever in the world’s opinion—you do not know him—do not say that, it is harsh, it is cruel—do not say that.”

But Cecil Bouverie did not retract the words he spoke, and Amy’s tears fell faster.

“You do not believe me,” she said, “you have never believed me; you think us both, both unworthy of the slightest credence, even now when we would prove to you that we are not.”

And yet there came no answer from Cecil; averting his face he listened to her without uttering a syllable.

“Take it,” continued she, “oh! take it—and leave us as we are, if you will. Do not fear I will ask to be with you—lighten us in part of the heavy grief that lies upon us, even though you will not forgive us—think it but an equivalent, a poor one for the misery your marriage with me caused you—think of it as you like, only let us not know you to be poor and friendless—”

“As you have been,” hastily exclaimed Cecil, as he turned towards her, and betrayed a countenance where an expression of pride still struggled with one of acute suffering, “as you have been. But no, no, not like you shall I patiently live, or bear the future; I shall curse my own blindness, curse her who has wrought this work of woe for me.”

She did not understand him—how could she? Lady Haviland’s treachery was unknown to her, she thought his latter words applied to herself, and looking up with a glance of anguish—

“Do not strike the wounded,” she said, “the curse of your hatred, the curse of the broken-hearted has clung to me long enough.”

“Then it will come home to me now,” replied Cecil, almost inaudibly.

“To you?” answered Amy, and she understood his words as bearing reference to his present change of fortune, “it cannot come to you—not, not as I have felt it.”

“Bitterer than it has borne upon you, it will burthen me,” rejoined he, “past retrospections, the remembrance of you whom I—”

Love, love and have wronged, was the phrase that trembled on his lips, but Amy guessed it not, heard it not, and seeing him check its utterance, she filled up the pause with the word which she imagined he was about to speak.

“Hate,” she murmured, “hate. Yet you did not pronounce the word, and there was mercy in that.”

“Hate! mercy!” repeated Cecil, and he glanced at her thin, reed-like figure, her faded cheek, and his own past and present harshness, his newly awakened love rose to his mind, “mock me not with those words, or you will drive me mad—I have been merciless—I must be so still.”

“No, no,” she answered, moving to closer him; for his voice and look revealed a secret feeling of self-reproach, which, although she could not comprehend it, she yet hoped might lead to some concession on his part towards her own and her father’s views, “no, no,” she answered, “be generous—forgive, accept—”

“Never!” interrupted Cecil, recalled to himself by her last words, “let us part—do not waste more time here...your mission is a fruitless one...leave me at once.”

“Not yet,” returned Amy, “not till you consent to receive the only atonement my father can offer you for the past.”

“He owes me none,” replied Cecil, “once more let us part.”

“I cannot, I will not,” she rejoined. “None?” she repeated, a moment afterwards, and her cheek grew very, very pale, “none? Do you then forget the wife he forced upon you when you loved elsewhere?...she, who has embittered your life ever since you were so fatally united to her...unwillingly, indeed, but too effectually...Cecil, Cecil, you have not forgotten, or forgiven that.”

“Not his efforts,” murmured he, “not the dishonour he brought upon himself.”

“Nor her, who since then has been the object of your hatred,” said Amy.

Cecil Bouverie dared not reply; he could not trust himself sufficiently to do so, and Amy raised her large, dark, melancholy eyes to his face to read her answer there; yet she saw not its expression; for one hand shaded his brow while the other lay trembling like an aspen leaf

on the frame work of a chair near him. His silence seemed to her a confirmation of her own words.

“ I would that I could die !” she passionately exclaimed, “ I live but to bind you to a life you abhor—I live but to sever you from her you love.”

“ Love? hate, Amy, I hate her,” he exclaimed, fiercely, “ know that she never loved me—know I have been deceived, tricked—and feel,” he added, in a lower voice, “ feel that justice has overtaken me there.”

And he turned round—in time to see Amy sink back against the table at her side overwhelmed with sudden hope, sudden fear. He saw her pale cheek become yet paler, her fragile form bend, and in the next moment she was lifted in his embrace. Still she was not insensible ; a momentary weakness seized her, but her closed eyes soon opened, and she perceived, or, as she afterwards imagined, dreamed that she perceived an expression of exquisite ten-



derness pass over Cecil's face, then heard the words,

"You are ill, Amy—this is no place for us to meet."

"No, no," she replied, as she more fully recovered, and again stood at his side to see his usual look of cold indifference once more settle on his features, "anywhere but here—I have dreaded to speak as I would have otherwise done, I feared a stranger's entrance---let me speak with you elsewhere."

"It cannot be," returned he, for he knew that in the constraint now existing between them from the necessity of their speaking in a public room, lay his only chance of concealing his love for her, "it cannot be; a further discussion of the motives that induced you to seek me is useless, my resolution remains unchanged---we had better part now---part here."

"Part!" replied Amy, "part!---knowing your heart is bruised---that my love, the love which you reject, is the only one which has

been truly yours---feeling you have doomed yourself to a wandering, laborious life---"

"Such has been yours, such will now be mine," interrupted Cecil, "that which you have borne I can bear."

"But I, I was not utterly alone---not utterly uncared for, as you will be," returned Amy, her large eyes filling with tears, "I had my father with me---that father," she continued, as she saw Cecil remained silent, "that father who seemed yours until you knew him mine, and you loved him---"

"He was not worthy of that love."

"He wishes to retrieve the past."

"The dishonour was real, though the deed was not—he never can."

"He will not seek your presence—he does not ask your forgiveness."

"My determination will not alter."

"Cecil, Cecil!"

"Let us part."

“Hear me!”

“Leave me.”

“For ever?—not for ever?”

“For ever.”

“I will not!—I will not!” continued Amy, as she stood, pale and trembling, before him; “you cannot bid me do so. I sought you to ask forgiveness for myself—for my father—I now ask for none. But whether you will or no, from city to city, from land to land, I will follow you; hatred, contempt shall not turn me from your path. I will breathe the same air with you, gaze on the same sky; and when death comes, in the same land I will die. Time has not weakened my love for you—time never will; your grave shall be mine, save if death’s hand is laid upon me ere it is laid on you, then, then in my last moments love shall give me strength to guide my steps to your feet—and,—no, Cecil, you will not then turn away—you will do justice to the heart you

have not known—you will believe in its love, and the tears which never yet fell for me shall then fall, the heart that never felt for mine shall then feel—for love wins love, though not till death has sealed its truth—as it will seal mine, Cecil.”

She paused for some minutes, breathless from the rapidity with which she spoke, and moving nearer to him—

“ You are angry—you are pale,” continued she, gazing stedfastly up in his face—“ hatred still urges its sway over your mind. Were I not a woman you could strike me to the earth in your anger; it would be merciful to do so; you have stricken my spirit with the iron coldness of despair, my heart is breaking—but Cecil, Cecil have pity, and spare me yet !”

He did not reply, his eyes were fastened upon the ground, and they never once moved from their downcast position.

“ Tell me that you will bear me with you—

in poverty or pain, no matter—poverty will be happiness—pain will not be felt when with you.”

He lifted his hand, as if to motion her away.

“ Speak, Cecil, speak, for the love of Heaven speak !”

Still not one word.

“ I will bear everything patiently—harshness, unkindness, coldness, what you will ! but let me go with you—mine shall be the life of the slave—let me go with you !”

“ No,” at length answered Cecil with a powerful effort at self-command, and his brow dark as it was with the shadows of the conflicting feelings within him seemed to Amy dark with anger—“ no, that may not be ; return to your father ; the ties between us have been broken long since. I would not have you—I will not have you with me. Quit—quit the room, and torture me not longer with your presence.”

Amy did not comprehend the secret meaning of her husband's words, she saw not the pangs of love and pride struggling within him, and she thought it was in bitter wrath he spoke to her; yet without a tear, she once more approached him, once more attempted to speak, but ere she had time to do so a gentleman entered the coffee-room, and stepping back from Cecil's side, she instinctively threw down her veil.

The stranger on his entrance carelessly glanced at Amy, then addressing Cecil whom he seemed to know, asked him whether he was ready to fulfil an engagement which he had made with him on the previous day, and the latter advancing towards him answered affirmatively.

"But directly?" demanded his friend, "for in truth we shall sadly disappoint De Renneville if we are late."

"I have been expecting you for this hour,"

replied Cecil; "and I scarcely thought you would now come."

"It was that intolerable puppy Farskin who detained me," rejoined the new comer; "we shall not however be so very much beyond the time, if we set off at once."

"Which I am ready to do immediately," returned Cecil, as he followed his friend from the door.

For two or three minutes Cecil and his companion stood beneath the porte cochere in order to speak to another gentleman, who just then entered the hotel; and during those moments Amy sufficiently recovered from the confusion she experienced on the interruption of her interview with Cecil to follow him to where he was now standing.

"Is it thus we part?" she said—"will you give me no hope for the future?"

"None," he answered; and he stepped back from the side of his friend for a moment or two.

“ And this—this is your last word?”

“ My last,” he replied; “ I leave Paris to-day—even now.”

And linking his arm in that of his companion they hurried on towards the Place du Carrousel.

Amy remained during some seconds on the spot where her husband parted from her, gazing after his retreating form, and lost in thoughts of anguish and despair, till the continual hurrying to and fro of the waiters, visitors and inmates of the hotel aroused her to a sense of her position, and she passed onwards towards the Rue St. Honoré in search of Kate.

“ You have been a long time away,” said the latter as she stopped before the fiacre at the entrance of the street—“ I was coming to seek you.”

Amy did not answer; she only pressed Kate's arm as she entered the vehicle, as if to



urge her to hurry homewards, and Kate did not again question her, for she guessed the true result of the interview, and thus in silence they pursued their drive to their hotel in the Place Vendôme.

## CHAPTER XII.

Du moment qu'on aime  
L'on devient si doux,  
Et je suis moi même  
Plus tremblant que vous.

MARMONTEL.

CECIL BOUVERIE did not permanently quit Paris on the day on which he parted with Amy. After a sojourn of five or six days at Vincennes, whither he and his friend went to visit a mutual acquaintance, he returned to the metropolis, fully intending to leave it on the following morning for the south of France.

It is not to be imagined that Cecil, cold-hearted as he seemed to be, could reflect upon his last meeting with his wife without strong feelings of compunction being at the same time awakened within his heart. Often did the question arise in his mind as to whether there was not more cruelty than honourable sentiment in the part he had acted—acted, though it proved torture for him to do so.

But it was self—self which he still idolized, and he would not yet give way to the love and the remorse he felt towards Amy, because he could not stoop to acknowledge an error, for fear of the malicious whispers of a few idle tongues. And he again sacrificed the heart of the wife he loved to the world's opinion, to his own stern pride.

But what weight ought the world's opinion to have on us when we clearly see the path our duty traces out for us to pursue? The secret motives of the heart are rarely fathomed, and many a man has worn the appearance of in-

interested motives when, had he been better known it might have been seen that he was entirely free from their reality, for a complication of the purest thoughts, and the most untoward circumstances may often tend to implicate a noble mind in an erroneous accusation. There, in fact, lies the strength of the temptation in some of the more delicate trials of life we pass through; few men stay to test their feelings by the rules of reason ere they proceed to action; but follow that sentiment which is the most favourably received in the world, and deem they act wisely and well. Do they so? Are not false ideas of honour oftentimes blindly propagated in that world, the mainstay of whose virtue is a selfish pride which sometimes leads it to reverence the appearance of virtue rather than its real presence? Take for instance a man who is inclined to forgive another any insult that he has offered him, how often is he prevented from doing so by the dread of his friends calling him

meanrspirited, or too tolerant of vice. Where, however, in truth lies that meanness of spirit, the imputation of which he so much dreads? is it not in the weakness of mind that shrinks from a good action because it has the semblance of evil. True, we should avoid the appearance of evil as much as we can, for even that too often leads us to its reality, but when there are only two lines of conduct for us to pursue, the one intrinsically good, yet seeming evil, the other radically wrong though apparently wise and good, ought we not to chuse the former? There are as many trials of life in these kind of cases as in any other, and the man who will not forgive an injury for fear of the world's judgment of the matter errs- against the light of his own conscience, which tells him so to do; while he who will not receive a benefit from the hand of one who has offended him, and whom he pretends to forgive, does not forgive at all. Yet in such an instance as this, as there motives with-

in motives, feelings within feelings (who can easily fathom the innermost thoughts of his own heart?) the man to whom an office of kindness is preferred should strictly judge himself, and see what feeling preponderates in his mind at the time; if it be pride let him accept it, if it be covetousness, let him refuse it, for we may not gratify even another's best feelings at the risk of fostering some evil passion in our own souls. Nevertheless the refusal should be so worded that he whose friendly offers are rejected may feel the will is taken for the deed.

All this bears upon Cecil Bouverie who in the present case forbore to retrieve his harshness towards Amy, because he dreaded lest it should be said in the world, for which he had alone lived, that he did so to ingratiate himself with her and Sir Arthur for the sake of the gold they now possessed. And in thus preferring his pride before his duty he proved himself still selfish—pride is always so.

It was with the above wearying thoughts

that Cecil passed the day previous to the one on which he meant to leave Paris ; the preparations for his departure awhile indeed served to divert his mind from them, but in the evening he sat alone in his own apartments wholly occupied with their bitterness. Gradually, however, all around him became quiet, and Cecil was at length made aware by the lengthening shadows spreading over the room that evening was fast coming on. Looking towards a time-piece he saw it was near eight o'clock, and feeling the slightest exertion on his part would afford him some relief from his present painful reflections, he soon after rose, and taking up his hat, walked towards the door of the apartment, with the intention of strolling out for half-an-hour through the darkened streets, when as he closely approached, it was pushed ajar from without and Kate Bouverie faced her brother.

Cecil was strangely surprised to see his sister there, for he did not even know she had accompanied Sir Arthur and Amy to Paris, and in a

tone of astonishment he uttered her name. She did not answer him but advancing towards the centre of the room, beckoned him to her side, then with an attempt to speak burst into tears.

And vainly during a few minutes Cecil asked her the cause of her agitation, vainly questioned how she came to be in Paris. At last however she turned towards him, and in a tone of mingled grief and anger, said,

“ You saw Amy the other day—you parted with her, notwithstanding all her prayers and entreaties—well, you will soon have to part with her for ever—she is dying, at least they say there is no hope she will recover.”

Like the effect of a sharp and sudden wound piercing to the very heart, so seemed the words of Kate to act on Cecil Bouverie, his features became contracted with a sudden spasm of feeling, and for a moment he looked at Kate, sharply, earnestly.

“ Dying ?” he murmured, “ how is that ?”

“ How ?” replied Kate in the same tones as



before, "do you think the heart will always patiently endure bruise after bruise, pang after pang? or the spirit not yield at times to despair? Would you know more? When you so heartlessly repulsed Amy, I met her, for I accompanied her hither, and we went home together. She only said you intended to leave Paris on that day; she never breathed a syllable more of what had passed between you; but I can partly guess the scene—she grieved, can I tell you how she grieved? half madly I believe—for a strong fever is upon her now. Will you see her or not? chuse for yourself, it matters not to her—she will be utterly unconscious of your presence, your coldness, your remorse—she is delirious."

"Heaven forgive me," ejaculated Cecil, and his lips, cheeks and brow all turned to the colour of stone, "Kate, Kate, what can be done to save her?"

"Save her?" rejoined his sister, "do you dream of it? I should not be here if there

were the slightest hope of her recovery, I knew nothing less than the actual presence of death would make you feel. I scarcely expected to see you in Paris; I thought you had left long ago, and I know not what determined me to try whether your departure was a real or a feigned one. Will you come with me?" she added as she held out her hand to lead him from the room, "Howitt is below with some sort of a conveyance, will you come?"

Cecil Bouverie made no answer but suffered her to proceed towards the staircase down which he mechanically followed her, and in twenty minutes more he stood by the sick bed of Amy.

Amy was not sleeping, when Kate and Cecil entered her room, she was leaning against some pillows placed at her side, talking rapidly and incoherently. Her long, golden hair, unbound by her continual restlessness, streamed downwards in waving masses, and her dark eyes, brilliant with an unearthly light, glanced wildly

round the apartment, while the crimson flush of fever burnt her cheek and brow. She did not seem to notice their entrance, and still continued to speak to some phantom, her own imagination appeared to have conjured up. Even when Cecil stood beside her, and, utterly unconscious of the presence of his uncle—of Kate—took her hand, and bowing his face upon it, gave way to a grief, that now amounted to the keenest agony it was possible for a human creature to feel, she did not remark him, tho action indeed seemed to strike her, and she lifted her eyes to his countenance, but did not recognize him, and still addressing herself to an imaginary being before her.

“Is she yet there?” she exclaimed at intervals, “yes, there, with the bridal wreath upon her brow—and her dark eyes—dark eyes? did he say he loved dark eyes? mine, mine are dark. He will wed her—she is more beautiful than I—he does not love me; does

not know the anguish of my heart. Give me my jewelled crown—I will outshine her to-night; he said I looked beautiful in that. Why are those flowers on her brow? I am not yet dead; not yet. Why should she come here, in those snowy robes and that rich veil? he is not with me! he never forgave me! he always hated me! am I not an out-cast, a foundling? has he not called me so? Love me? all used to love me; none do now. Herbert, father, where are they? I never deceived him; father, father, it is you who have done this! Tell them not to come near me, with their black wings, father—they come to bear me away! listen, she tells them to approach me; they are all around me now. Who are you? who are you? what words are yours? You would lead me to the grave; but the grave is what I wish for. They are gone! gone! who stands in their place? Cecil! hush, hark—he says he loves me—that is false, Cecil, false!”

“False!” exclaimed Cecil, and his whole frame trembled with strong emotion, while his tears fell fast and thick upon her. “False! no, no, Amy!”

“Again!” she continued, more incoherently, “again! and his voice is low and kind, like the voices I hear in the silence of night—yes, yes, there are voices, sweet voices, that gather round me when all are sleeping, and they whisper he loves me. Look yonder...there is radiance, there is light...but those dark forms are still there—why do they smile those strange smiles, and mock me? What say they? that the grass grows over my grave? What sad music! they sing; how their eyes gleam! I will not go with them; not yet; back!—father, Kate, send them back; I am not cold; I hate the dark vault, and they bear me to that. A shroud! a shroud! wind me in it; only bury me in the green fields; I will not go with them. No, no, when I am dead they will marry; he will not grieve for me. God, let

me die at once; he has broken my heart; let me die! She is there again; as lovely as ever; look at the long lashes, the bright hair; he is with her, too; away, away, I am dying now; Cecil, do not look so fearfully upon me, I am dying; oh, speak kindly to me once, but once; death is in my heart."

And Amy sank back exhausted, and a long, feeble, and irregular moaning, alone escaped her lips.

Leaning over her, feeling only how deeply he had wronged, how dearly he loved her, watched Cecil Bouverie. Unmindful of everything, save her who, he thought, was dying before him, he passed that night of danger, for of danger he knew it was. They told him they had no hopes of her recovery; he felt there were none; and an agony of remorse oppressed his heart; an agony which he did not strive to conceal from the uncle, who watched with him over his child. Pride, pride, that hard, stern visitant of the human

heart, was gone, and Cecil, though sometimes conscious of the presence of Sir Arthur, never turned aside from the couch of Amy; his thoughts and feelings were centred too powerfully upon her, to permit him to do so. And during that long, painful night, the long sigh, the quick, convulsive sob of the sufferer, alone startled the quietude of the apartment. No word passed between the uncle and nephew, though they had to listen to the incoherent ramblings of Amy's disordered imagination, still wandering upon subjects, fraught with poignant grief to them both.

And the past, all, all the past came back to Cecil's memory. Again and again, every harsh word or act of his, which had any reference to Amy, recurred to him, and increased the bitterness of the present moment. How eagerly, at the bedside of the dying, do we think of any kindness we have done them, how bitterly do we repent every injury they have received at our hands! Impatient words,



harsh tones, uncharitable surmises, are there remembered, each cruel coldness, with which we have at times shrunk from their confidence, repulsed their love, recollected, and adds fresh pangs to our grief. Self, self in the heart of the mourner is annihilated then, and we clearly see our own faults, and excuse those of others. Cecil had never yet stood by the death-bed of one he loved, never yet felt this; but now, by the couch of her whom his own hand had stricken with her death-blow, he experienced all the pain that strong remorse, strong love, could make him feel. He had rejected the love of a young and trusting wife; cast aside her forgiveness; left her in her young heart's desolation, to weep, to mourn, to madden over the sorrows he inflicted upon her; those sorrows had come back to his own bosom, to burn it with the unquiet fires of repentance.

At length the grey dawn appeared, and spread a faint light through the darkened



apartment, but still the watchers watched, and the sleepless one remained sleepless, talking at intervals wildly, then sinking into a state of restless silence. Afterwards the broad daylight came; the sparkling sunbeams shone between the chinks of the shutters, glanced athwart the floor, and then Cecil Bouverie looking round, found himself alone—alone with the dying.

He gazed on the brow that his lips were closely pressed to, on the dark bright eyes which still met his with a glance betokening the wandering of the mind within, he parted the dishevelled tresses that fell over her face, and bent to hear the words she was murmuring—they were words of prayer.

And could prayers rise from the lips of the unconscious one? did the helpless unknowingly pray, and none pray for her? was there not one to join in the simple words she uttered, not even he who leaned over her in the sharp agony of despair? Surely he was humbled enough—surely the heart which had not prayed

for years might then pray! the All Omnipotent, could he not save? could he not forgive? was the Creator powerless over the creature? And in that moment when all earthly hope was wrecked, when his soul had in its anguish no stay to rest upon—no succour to seek, the voice of the fever-stricken as it gave faint utterance to the daily prayer she was accustomed to repeat, taught Cecil Bouverie where to look for help; the faith of his childhood came back to his heart, the haughty spirit yielded, and bowing his head he murmured for Amy the words she herself had spoken. Man cannot always war against his conscience—cannot always resist the voice of the Saviour God.

Another hour, and yet Amy's glance was wild and unsettled, still the long sigh, the incoherent phrase parted her burning lips, but gradually the hot lids closed over her bright eyes, the golden lashes lay quietly on the crimson cheek, the feverish hand sunk listlessly by her side, and she slept—at first with heavy

and catching sighs—still she slept. Hour after hour passed—long hours, yet tranquil ones, for the slumberer's rest remained unbroken. Her pulse slackened in its rapid beat, her throbbing temples cooled, and her restlessness became less apparent. The physician came, too, and promised her amendment.

Hour after hour passed ; and at length, when the evening shadows again appeared, while Kate watched beside her, Amy opened her dark eyes, and fixing them upon her face with the earnest glance of consciousness, uttered her name.

Gently Kate thrust Cecil, who was standing near her, aside so that Amy might not suddenly perceive him, then bent over her with a kind smile, and kinder words.

“ I have been ill, have I not ? ” said Amy, and she passed her hand over her brow.

“ Yes,” replied Kate, “ but you are better now.”

“ Better ? ”

“ Yes, yes—much better.”

“ Have I been very ill, then ?” she added, with an endeavour at recollection ; “ how many days is it since we arrived here ?—how many days is it since I have been thus ?”

“ Not many,” answered Kate, unwilling that she should immediately recur to the past ; “ only you must not talk, Amy—you must remain quiet.”

“ Quiet ?” repeated Amy, and sudden tears sprang to her eyes, for returning sense brought a full remembrance of the past to her mind. “ I thought I should have sought the quiet of the grave ere this. Where is my father ?” asked she a moment afterwards ; “ has he been here ?”

“ Yes,” replied Kate.

“ And you ?”

Again Kate answered in the affirmative.

“ And no one else ?”

Kate knew not what to answer ; she felt the meaning that Amy’s words bore, but she dared

not tell the truth, for she did not know what effect it might have upon her. She even motioned to Cecil, who was moving forward, to keep back, and then answered—

“None.”

“None?” echoed Amy; “I thought so; he said he would leave Paris.”

And she closed her eyes with a painful sigh.

During two or three days Amy was not permitted to see her husband, and did not even know he was underneath the same roof as herself, for the fever left her very weak, and they feared the sudden excess of joy she might give way to would prove too much for her in her feeble state. Gradually, however, she grew better, and on the fourth day from the commencement of her convalescence, was able to sit up for an hour or two. Then Kate cautiously told her Cecil was still in Paris, that he had been with them during the most trying part of her illness, and Amy’s wasted cheek coloured with the bright glow of hope as she

listened to her words; but soon the deep blush faded away, and her features assumed a more death-like hue than before.

“ Will he see me ?” she asked.

“ Yes,” answered Kate.

“ And soon ?”

“ Directly.”

“ Kate, Kate, has he forgiven us ?”

“ Forgiven, Amy !—he has nothing to forgive.”

Amy looked piercingly at her, while with an attempt to rise from the sofa on which she was sitting, she sank back again upon it.

“ Has he said so ?” she murmured ; “ ask him to come hither, Kate ; I would go to him only I cannot.”

And Kate moved away to comply with her request, and in a short time afterwards Cecil Bouverie stood in Amy’s presence.

She started as she feebly rose to meet him on his entrance, for the pallor of his countenance and the look of ill-health which his anx-

iety on her account, as well as every other circumstance of late had combined to give him, surprised her, and her eyes rested vacantly upon him for a moment or two. He came forward—came to her side, then stood still, with a vain effort to speak. Her look rested upon him, enquiringly.

“You are much changed,” she involuntarily said, as she noticed his altered appearance.

He looked up, and she perceived the tears gather in his eyes.

“Changed!” he repeated, “yes, changed in heart, Amy.”

Her eyes sought his fearfully, but she stood by his side perfectly motionless, and without uttering one word.

He saw her timid glance, and knew what was passing in her mind, knew the love he had hitherto repelled, now dreaded to express itself by word or look—that wounded in past times by his cruel harshness, like a delicate flower crushed by a gauntleted hand, it could not at



present unfold itself before him without a bruise or fear. They who truly love wish not to be feared, for it is a reproach upon the strength of their own affection if they are so; it was a bitter one to Cecil at that moment, and in a low, sad voice, he asked,

“Do you then fear me, Amy?”

“Fear you?” she answered, and an expression of pain passed slowly over her features, “fear you? no.”

Yet she did; pale as a marble statue, apparently as immoveable, she still stood there, and though part of his remorse was betrayed in his voice and look, though her heart yearned to speak the affection she yet bore him, she shrank from so doing, and dreaded to presume upon the compassion she had at length excited in his breast. Cecil gazed earnestly up into her face, he wished for a word of half forgiveness, ere he spoke again; she feared to utter one, and at length reading the workings of her mind



more clearly, though his heart ached as he did so, he clasped her in his embrace.

“The past, the past,” he said, “Amy, can you forgive it?”

“Cecil!”

“Love me?”

She leant half lifeless on his arm, a short sob broke every now and then from the parted lips, and bright tears gushed from beneath the golden lashes that drooped over the dark and lustrous eyes, while a faint, red tinge spread gradually over the ashy cheek. She did not answer him in words, one moment she raised herself in his embrace, one moment her eyes were uplifted to his, then again her head sank on his shoulder, and taking his hand within her own she pressed it to her lips, while warm tears fell fast upon it.

“Amy,” said Cecil, “you yet love me, love me after all I have caused you to suffer, after having twice nearly brought you to the grave; twice!” he repeated with a shudder, as he re-

membered the unfortunate accident in Ireland, while the thought which haunted him in past years came back in full force to his mind, and he still imagined she might possibly deem him wilfully guilty of it.

Amy looked up into his countenance, she did not understand him, nor could she comprehend why his eyes now fixed themselves upon her face with an expression of painful enquiry. In her silence he read a seeming confirmation of his suspicions, and he stepped a few paces from her side.

"It was not so," Cecil uttered slowly and painfully, while the hot blood rushed up to his brow and cheek, "not so Amy, I was harsh, cruel—but not the cold-blooded villain; if that suspicion has lived within your mind, I am punished enough."

Still she did not fathom his meaning, her dark eyes glanced wonderingly at him, and a doubt, a wild doubt of her ever having thought so arose in Cecil's brain. As it dwelt there, he

dreaded to give utterance to the words he wished to speak, for fear of even then awakening that terrible suspicion within her, the idea however, had haunted him too long to be now easily repressed, the very agony he was enduring could no longer be borne in silence, and in a thick hurried voice he addressed her,

“Amy,” he said, “at Lorrequer Darling’s, the accident—what think you of that?”

His unkindness, his coldness came to her recollection—nothing more; she did not even yet guess to what he alluded, and she answered gently, “That is all forgotten now.”

“Forgotten!” repeated Cecil, and her words not satisfying him, again he tried to explain his meaning, though again he failed till at last more earnestly striving to overcome his emotion, he turned towards her again.

“This, this is torture,” he said, “let me know the worst, the truth at once, Amy—do you think, have you ever thought that I will-

ingly, knowingly perilled your life in Ireland in the manner I accidentally did?"

Amy understood all at present; the suspicious circumstances in which Cecil had been so strangely placed, his dislike of her at the time, all conspired to make her comprehend the thoughts then oppressing him; but she also felt him guiltless, and had never for one moment believed him otherwise, she saw the misery he experienced even while she paused in her reply, the fears of the slighted woman vanished before the pain he seemed enduring, and hastily approaching him, she passed her arm through his, as if to seek protection from that idea, from all other evils in his love.

"Cecil," said she, "I knew you too well, too good, too noble for so horrible an idea to arise within me—Cecil, for the love of Heaven banish it from your mind—it has tortured you much I see."

“It has,” he replied, “even in past years, Amy, when I did not love you, it haunted me, and for that reason I shunned you more than I otherwise should have done. God be thanked you did not entertain that thought—I could not have borne the certainty of your having suspected me of so deep a crime, loving you as I do now.”

“Loving me?” repeated Amy, as she glanced up at her husband’s countenance, and saw indeed that he loved her, “loving me?”

“More than life, Amy!”

“You will not leave me again, Cecil?”

“No, no.”

“You do not believe that I deceived you?”

“I know you loved me, and feel, bitterly feel my conduct in past years.”

“I will go with you, wherever you go.”

“We will not part again.”

And thus they stood; he murmuring words of self-reproach, of love, and she listening until not only the certainty of his compassion, but

also of his affection grew upon her, and she was happy.

Later in the day, Kate who happened to join them, mentioned her uncle, and Amy's pale face became death-like, and Cecil's grew for a moment stern and cold. It was but for a moment—in the next he turned towards the gentle being at his side, and that look vanished.

“I will see him, Amy,” said he; “I will take that which may keep you from feeling poverty no more; and then we will go to other lands, and I will toil night and day to gain the gold we want; you shall not have a wish ungratified, Amy; poor though we may be for awhile, we will be happy.”

He did not then think that he was severing her from the parent she loved, or depriving her of the property which would be eventually her own, for the proud man in his selfishness is sometimes blind, and can only be taught humility step by step. And Amy felt a pang as she listened to his words, though she

did not express it, though she looked up with a smile, and answered—

“Anywhere, with you, Cecil!”

That same morning Cecil Bouverie and Sir Arthur met for the first time alone. They had often seen each other in the presence of Kate and of Amy, but had not spoken, and now when they knew there was a necessity for so doing they both evinced a double embarrassment. Sir Arthur felt—deeply felt the rejection of all his advances towards remedying his nephew’s change of fortune, and a strong feeling of resentment existed in his mind when he thought of his conduct to his daughter; yet knowing that Amy would alone be happy with Cecil, he was still determined to offer him the same conditions she had done a few days before, and seeing Cecil appeared unwilling to speak, he was the first to do so.

“Amy has told me,” he began, in a calm, low voice—“Amy has told me you consent to the proposal she made you a short while since;

I should wish to hear your answer from your own lips."

Pride rose again to the heart and to the brow of Cecil Bouverie, and his cheek flushed, his eyes were fixed firmly on the ground, but he remembered the promise he gave to Amy, and with an effort to restrain it, he said—

"She told the truth."

It seemed as if that were all the reply Sir Arthur wished to hear, for the moment after it was uttered, he moved towards the door. Cecil, however, felt he could not so part with the man who thus endeavoured to retrieve his former errors, and he pronounced his name.

Sir Arthur turned back.

"Understand me," said Cecil, with an effort, while his brow, beneath the influence of wounded pride, became red and pale by turns, "that which will suffice for Amy—for I will not part with her—that give me—no more."

"And the remainder?" rejoined Sir Arthur



after a minute's silence—"in whose hands must it rest?"

"In yours."

"Not in mine. Amy is my child—you have taken her—take the property then."

"No," Cecil replied; "Amy will live as I must live."

"And you," rejoined Sir Arthur, half bit-bitterly, "you are still selfish—still would keep her from her own."

Cecil winced under the reproof, and was silent.

"She is content," at length he said. "she is content to go with me where I go, and to be what I shall be. I have sacrificed my self respect to accede to her wishes—to mine, in this case. I have taken from you that which I would have rather begged from any one else. I cannot do more."

A deadly paleness overspread the features of Sir Arthur as his nephew uttered the last words.

“ You have sacrificed no self-respect,” he answered, “ nor would you were you even to accept the whole of what I offer you. Years ago we were as father and son ; my fault separated us, but I would now retrieve it, for I have bitterly repented it. After Amy you are my natural heir. Amy is your wife, therefore in refusing to accept it you only ward off enjoying it till the period of my death, when it must all be yours ; take it then ; I do not ask you to forget the past or to forgive it.”

Cecil Bouverie did not answer, and Sir Arthur turned away, while his features assumed a look of keen anguish.

“ And my child ?” he asked—“ she must go with you—and where will that be ?”

“ Abroad, abroad,” replied Cecil—“ not in England.”

“ Not in England ?” repeated Sir Arthur ; “ then I may never see her again ; childless, alone, friendless, unforgiven—”

But he stopped ; for he thought his words

seemed half an appeal to his nephew's feelings, and he did not wish to make one, as with regard to his own wretchedness he knew he deserved it all. Yet Cecil felt those words; he called to mind that he was the father of Amy, the wife he loved, the wife he had wronged so bitterly, so cruelly even after every reparation man or woman could offer had been offered to him. And they, the parent and the child, they loved each other; through the long years in which he cast them off, their mutual affection had been their only solace, and should he separate them now? inflict another wound on Amy's gentle heart? He lifted his eyes towards the aged form before him, gazed upon the white, white hair, the sorrow-stricken countenance, and the days of his childhood came back to his memory, when as a boy he watched that face with the eagerness of filial affection, when the withered hand which lay trembling on the table beside him stroked the flowing hair of the merry child, and a kind smile beamed round

the lips with delight, upon his boyish exercises. Had not that old man loved him? He felt he had—knew the past error of his life had been a heavy burthen for him to bear, that he had striven in every way save in its actual avowal to atone for it, and the heart of Cecil Bouverie bowed to those recollections of his childhood; yes, the kind feelings of past years overcame the haughty spirit of the proud man, and in that moment all the faults of his uncle were forgotten, or if he thought of them it was forgivingly. As a son stands in the presence of an erring father, so stood he now by the side of Sir Arthur.

“Uncle,” he said, in a low thick voice, “do with me what you will—you and Amy I cannot separate.”

A hectic flush mounted to the cheek of Sir Arthur, as these unexpected words met his ear; even to the broad wrinkled forehead it rose, then faded to the same pallid hue as be-

fore. Turning quickly round, he gazed upon Cecil's changing countenance.

"Do you accept then—forgive?" he exclaimed.

"I have nothing to forgive," he replied.

"But the past—Amy?"

"I love her!" was Cecil's rejoinder. "Uncle," he added, with effort, and after a short pause, "I would stand with you in the same light as before my marriage. No," he continued, more hurriedly, "your sentiments cannot remain what they at that time were; as Amy's father you must hate me—it is better you and I should never meet again. But dwell near us—see Amy. And this much before we part: that temptation which came on you overtook me also; you yielded to it—I partly did so. Yes," said Cecil, and he pressed back the heavy locks of dark brown hair from his brow where a burning blush of shame was now glowing, "yes; on the night in which I found

the later will—no matter how—I nearly did the same as you. I,---uncle,---I know, I feel the power of evil is strong---that we are all open to---no, no,” he added, “ I will not lie---it was dishonour---it was base, and you and I could have helped ourselves---it was dishonour.”

“ It was so,” replied Sir Arthur, who guessed the rest of what Cecil partly disclosed, while a faint trace of surprise and emotion was visible on his features, “ but you did not yield to the evil dictates of an erring heart.”

“ No,” echoed Cecil, in a thick broken voice, “ I did not yield.”

“ You still remain an upright man---I a dishonoured one.”

Cecil was silent for a moment or two.

“ Uncle,” at length he said, “ let the past be buried in oblivion.”

“ He who forgets his own errors is not worthy of the forgiveness of others,” rejoined Sir Arthur.

And there was a silence, and Sir Arthur rose to move away; but ere he did so, Cecil Bouverie held out his hand to him.

“Uncle,” he said, “for the sake of Amy, do not let us part thus; as the boy you once loved, as the child of your brother---uncle, forgive me.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

Hast thou not heard of time's omnipotence  
For or against what wonders he can do  
And will.

YOUNG.

SOME months after the last mentioned occurrences, before the altar in St. George's church, Hanover Square, stood two young brides--- known to you, kind reader, under the names of Kate Bouverie and Eveline Huntley. A brilliant party of well-loved friends surrounded them, and amongst them might have been seen Mrs. Beresford with her good-natured old countenance perfectly radiant with delight



Amy looking happy and beautiful. Edith, no longer Mrs. L'Estrange but Mrs. Glenallan, Cecil, Seymour, and lastly Count Auffenberg. Sir Arthur Bouverie was not with them, he lived a rigidly retired life in Wiltshire, and his presence at the wedding having been once requested by his niece was not again asked for, as Kate well knew from the wording of his refusal that he would not recede from it. Yet neither of the brides were forgotten by him, and Kate's and Eveline's splendid wedding favours were both his gifts; Kate he remembered as the niece who in all his troubles accorded him her compassion, Lady Eveline as the daughter-in-law of the man who had saved his child from a beggar's life.

Kate was married from her brother's house in Belgrave Street, Eveline from her father's; but both agreeing to have the ceremony performed on the same day, they met at the church. Beautiful brides they were, each being a good specimen of two different kinds of loveliness,

Kate's regular features, dark eyes, and darker hair twisted up à la Grecque, at one time attracting all the spectators attention; then the flaxen-haired Eveline, with her piquante countenance, and merry blue eyes tempered into something like seriousness on the present occasion sharing a large portion of it, too. The bridegrooms were also very handsome—Herbert particularly so; and more than once on that happy morning did her little ladyship in her childish vanity, secretly and admiringly compare the latter with Frank, who, his fair complexion having been very much sunburnt during his travels, she could not avoid considering extremely like what he often described Egyptians, Moors, and other dark people to be. Women are as vain of their lovers as of anything else.

The ceremony commenced, and soon the long white veils of the brides swept down over the crimson cushions on which they knelt; forth came the sweet accents that bound them

for ever to new views and new duties, and the fair cheeks of the young girls grew slightly paler as they tremulously spoke those words, the rustling of the silken robes clothing the friends who were near them was hushed, and maiden and matron all stood in listening silence. Fair brides! you had nothing to fear—for the hearts which then responded to yours were true ones, and they have never willingly grieved yours since!

The last word of the ceremony at length was uttered, and the bridal party moved back towards the vestry-room, and soon crowded its rather stinted dimensions, filled as it then was with another party just entering the church.

A queenly bride seemed the fair creature who now stepped within those sacred precincts—queenly and proud, for her dark eyes flashed haughtily around, though the jetty lashes of the eye-lids lay upon a crimsoned cheek. But paler than the white blossoms which bound her beautiful brow did that cheek become, as she

glanced over the room she entered ; the lids half closed upon the large black eyes, and the red lips turned white and quivered with strong emotion. She stood as if transfixed, gazing on the form of Cecil Bouverie, and her bosom heaved beneath her satin robe in passion and in pride. Suddenly her eye looked from him to Amy, who was leaning on Count Auffenberg's arm at a little distance from her, then a keener expression of suffering passed over her features, and followed by her attendant friends she moved forwards, led on by an old gentleman who accompanied her, and to whom she at that moment whispered a few words.

“ We cannot,” he replied, “ a great many people are in the church, we had better not go there, Ellen,—cannot we wait in this room for ten minutes or so ? He will arrive in less than that time, I dare say.”

“ Never mind, uncle,” was the hasty and angry reply, “ on, on !”

But she was forced to yield to her com-

panion's advice, and taking a seat...near whom? near Amy, the Countess of Haviland sat down trembling from head to foot.

Amy became as pale as Lady Haviland herself, and turned away her head; she did not wish to look at her, for, having heard from Cecil, something of what passed between them, she tried to avoid increasing her own or her Ladyship's confusion, by encountering her glance. Cecil Bouverie never once bent his eyes upon the Countess, after the moment in which he recognized her, but Lady Eveline and Kate, brides though they were, could not forbear looking at her, and her Ladyship knew herself to be the object of their scrutiny, of Count Auffenberg's, and she tried to master the agitation she felt, but could not. At length, however, Kate and Eveline, attended by their friends, moved to leave the vestry room, when, as they approached the door, with one accord they all turned back, and every eye was fixed upon Lady Haviland. Exclamations

of horror burst from their lips, as a gentleman passed by them, and after rapidly glancing round the apartment, stepped towards the white haired old man by her side, and whispered something in his ear. The Countess started up.

“Dead!” she cried, “my Lord of L—dead!”

And every one in the room turned towards her.

“It cannot be true,” she exclaimed, “it is not so, Sir Charles!”

“Would to heaven it were not!” replied the gentleman she addressed, “but I must not deceive you—it is true.”

“And how—how did he die?” said Lady Haviland, in a thick, hurried voice.

“Just now, in a fit,” he replied, “he has had many of them before—this one—”

“Proved fatal,” added the Countess.

She fell back upon the seat she had risen from, her marble brow contracted into dark

lines of horror, and her livid lips were drawn closely together; but as if to shield her emotion from the observation of those before her, an instant afterwards, she drew her hand over her face; when she looked up again, she was alone with her own friends, and she breathed a quick, convulsive sigh, yet strange to the listener's ear, seemed the words she then uttered:—

“It is better as it is,” she murmured, “better for him and for me!”

One more scene, kind reader, and my tale is done.

A twelvemonth passed since the last event, and on a lovely summer's evening, Amy was quietly sauntering up and down one of the greenswards of the Castle terrace, gazing at the warm beams of the setting sun, as they lay in yellow radiance, on the verdant slopes around her, accompanied by a pale, sickly-looking boy, of ten or twelve years of age.

“Now, Edwin,” at last said Amy, while

they both stopped, and glanced for a moment or two over the distant scenery of the Park, "now, Edwin, we must return to the Castle; see, the mists are rising."

"I saw that long ago," replied the boy, "but I thought you said you were going to wait here, till Mr. Bouverie returned from Sir Arthur's."

"Not if he does not return before night-fall," rejoined Amy, "come, let us go in."

And Amy and Edwin Haviland turned their steps towards the Castle.

"Mrs. Bouverie," said Edwin, as they proceeded on their way, "Mrs. Bouverie, here is a lady walking towards us."

"It is Kate, Mrs. Beresford," answered Amy.

"No, no," rejoined Edwin, with a quick expression of dislike spreading over his features, "it is her Ladyship—it is Lady Havi-



land—and I have not been to see her for this long time, and she will be so angry!”

During Edwin's exclamations, Amy glanced towards the figure advancing towards her, and saw it was, indeed, that of the Countess. She had not met her since Kate's and Eveline's marriage day, and on the present occasion, she was much struck with the change in her appearance. Her step and look were, indeed, as haughty, and her dress as rich as ever, but the bloom on her cheek was meretricious, and her lips were pallid. She came on leisurely to where Amy and Edwin stood, and then remained motionless, gazing at her for a moment or two in silence, sternly and enquiringly—at last she said:—

“Your husband is not in the Castle?”

“No,” replied Amy, in a low voice, and with a flushing cheek she moved a step or two from her.

“You mistake me,” rejoined the Countess, as she watched Amy's changing countenance,

“utterly mistake me—I do not wish to see him—I would avoid him—it is to you alone that I would speak.”

Then hastily turning towards Edwin, who remained near her, with his eyes intently fixed upon her face,

“Move on, sir,” said she, “neither Mrs. Bouverie or I wish for your company.”

“Move on!” replied the boy, “it is just what I intend to do. But how ill you look!” he added, with a glance of curiosity, “and that is paint upon your cheeks, too, exactly like the Boyards and I use when we dress up for charades.”

“Keep such observations to yourself for the future, and leave us,” returned the Countess.

“So I will,” rejoined Edwin, “for you are just as ill-tempered as ever you were. Good-bye, Mrs. Bouverie,” continued he, addressing Amy, “I’ll take the letter you gave me, down

to Weston House—Sir Arthur told me I might call upon him—good-bye.”

And Edwin Haviland ran off in the direction of the Castle.

The Countess turned towards Amy.

“ I do not come here for the sake of insulting you with my presence,” she said, “ I only come to ask you one question, which from my knowledge of your character I presume you will answer. I have timed my visit well. I have not met him, nor do I intend to do so—it would not be a very pleasant rencontre for either of us, considering what has happened.”

She spoke easily enough; but there was a bitterness in her tone of voice that Amy quickly discerned.

“ What would you ask of me?” she said.

“ This,” replied the Countess, more hastily, and her white brow became dark with the emotion she was trying to suppress, “ this; I would know whether the misery which I wrought in the home of Cecil Bouverie has

passed away—whether neither he nor you feel it now—has it passed away?”

“Entirely,” answered Amy after a moment’s pause.

“You speak hurriedly,” replied Lady Haviland, shortly. “You no doubt wish me gone; yet I must have many more words with you.” “Do you know,” she continued, with a bitter laugh, “do you know that when he and I parted he left me what he called a malediction.”

Amy murmured “no.”

“Aye, but he did though!” replied the Countess, wrapping her splendid cachemere tightly round her, and her features assumed a haughty expression. “Well, it has clung to me as he wished it to do, till the very pain it inflicted on me taught me better thoughts, and I have come hither this evening to know whether any words, any revelations I can say or make will more completely restore the happiness which in past years I destroyed. To you I came—not to him; he would tread me as a

worm beneath his feet if he could do so. Speak ! will any act or word of mine tend to remove any evil that through my means hovers over your path—over his ?”

“None,” replied Amy, gently, as she saw the workings of a proud, remorseful spirit visible on the noble forehead of the Countess.

Lady Haviland walked on in silence.

“Blame me most,” she said, after a pause of some length ; “your unhappiness was more my fault than his ; he spoke truly when he said I taught him to dislike you more than he otherwise would have done—I did.”

The brow of Amy became pale at the mention of her past sufferings, and she did not answer ; the Countess continued—

“You do not like to hear that time spoken of—it pains you—it pains me more. You can well afford to listen to its scenes and trials—you are happy. And say you that all those bitter recollections are stingless, now—all ?”

Again Amy answered “yes.”

“ It is well,” replied Lady Haviland, “ some women can easily forgive—easily forget ; had I been in your place, I could not have done so. But,” she continued, turning round and gazing more earnestly at Amy ; “ but your brow bespeaks you gentle though proud ; pride is the characteristic failing of the Bouveries—he had enough of it—I had more. See,” she added, placing her ungloved hand, which was sparkling with jewels, upon the fair forehead of Amy, “ the very lines of your face are the true lines of the Bouveries. I know them, having known your family from childhood ; the softer shades of your disposition are derived from your plebeian mother. You shrink from my touch,” continued she, after a moment’s silence, “ it is reasonable for you to do so. You wish me gone ; I shall soon relieve you of my presence. I have heard all I want to hear. For your satisfaction, too, be it known, we are not likely to meet again ; soon, very soon, I go to Italy. I thank you for having heard me thus patiently.”

They were now on the lawn before the Castle, and the Countess haughtily bowing her head to Amy, turned to depart. But the latter laid her hand upon her arm, and gazing up into her face, where, proud though its expression was, the dark lines of a severe grief were visible, said—

“Is this all you would say?”

“All,” repeated Lady Haviland.

“Nothing more?” again asked Amy, and she bent her eyes upon the ground.

“What more would you have me say?” replied the Countess, and she stood for some time in utter silence, then coming forward, she fixed her black eyes searchingly upon Amy’s face. “Do you mean that I should ask your forgiveness?” added she in the same calm, bitter tones as before.

“Not mine,” returned Amy.

“His?” demanded Lady Haviland, with a ringing, bell-like laugh—“What! do you not know him yet? He forgive! Yes, when the



distant home I am about to seek will prove a happy one—when my heart melts to gentleness, then, then it will be time enough to ask it—time enough to be refused. I am no weak Magdalen, no contrite penitent yet. Your forgiveness, however, I will ask for, as I see by your very manner you will accord it. One curse the less is one pang the less on our dying bed. I ask it then.”

“ I never wished you ill,” rejoined Amy.

The Countess again stood silent.

“ You have forgiven him more than he has to forgive me,” she said at length; “ you were the most wronged. He and I made your home a wretched one; but good triumphed over evil at last, and evil came upon the evil doer. I cannot love—I cannot hate you. Once more farewell.”

And Lady Haviland again turned towards Amy to meet her parting glance, and as she did so, a heavy step was heard from the gravel walk behind her, and in another minute Cecil



Bouverie stood by his wife's side. Though the cheeks of the Countess retained their false colour, her complexion blanched, and an expression of surprise passed over her features as she met his look of astonishment and stern enquiry. She did not, however, attempt to move away, but as if spell-struck at his appearance, continued to gaze at him in silence.

“ You are changed,” at length she said, still fixing her large dark eyes upon him, “ you are changed in heart and spirit since we last met. Your brow is no longer dark, nor does the lip curl so haughtily, even though you are bending your look on me ; a gentler influence than mine has been cast over you, and the errors of past years have been in some measure retrieved ; in the depths of that dark eye there is happiness—fare—you—well.”

And the sweep of her silken robes already rustled over the bending grass, as she stepped on towards the court-yard of the Castle, when Amy lifted her eyes entreatingly towards her

husband, and murmured a few words in his ear. Cecil Bouverie's brow darkened for a full minute; and the hard, cold look of old came back to his features, but gradually that look wore away, as he gazed down upon Amy's fair mild countenance, and listened to her voice, whose tones were now so dear to him, while for a moment he stood irresolute, then, as if yielding to her wishes, with a hasty step walked after the Countess. He overtook her before she reached the Castle gate, and again they confronted each other. Lady Haviland started at his approach.

"What would you?" she asked, "is it another curse that you would give me?"

"No," replied Cecil, coldly, "nothing more than this: last time we parted bitter words fell from me; I said I would never forgive you, never hoping myself to be forgiven, yet now, if my forgiveness may lighten your heart of the load it bears, if it will make it yield to

gentler influences, as mine has done, know that it is yours."

Proudly and calmly until his last words were spoken the Countess stood before Cecil Bouverie, seeming as though she expected reproaches, and waited to hear them. But when she fully understood them she remained for a moment gazing wildly at him, then stretching forth her hand laid it upon his arm. Hastily, as if reading his very thoughts, she bent her eyes on his.

"You forgive me!" she exclaimed, "you, the stern, the cold, the haughty—years of deception, years of misery? It is false, Cecil Bouverie, your own heart belies the words you speak—in secret you curse me—what new farce is this?"

"No," replied he, as he shook off her hand from his arm, "no! that forgiveness may have cost me much; but it is sincere."

Lady Haviland made no reply; she only

raised her hand, and passed it over her eyes, then placed it on her throat, and seemed as if struggling for speech. No words came as yet ; one long drawn sob alone parted her lips, and then, utterly regardless of the possibility of any one observing her, she sank on one knee.

“ For many a year,” she murmured, “ I have neither knelt to God or man, though I have erred towards both—I kneel to you—kneel in thankfulness that you have softened the spirit time nor affliction could bend. Let the blessings of the forgiven one light upon you, and upon her who has wrought this change in your mind ; my prayers, such as they are, shall be for you ; my heart, such as it is, shall bless you—Cecil, happy hours will come for you, dark ones for me—farewell, farewell.”

And rising, the tears flowing fast from her still brilliant eyes, and washing off the rouge that coloured her pallid cheeks, Lady Haviland

hastily drew her veil around her face, and proceeded towards her carriage which was stationed at the Castle gate. And with many a mournful thought of past years, thoughts of Amy, and of her who was now so bitterly repentant, Cecil Bouverie watched that carriage drive away; but when he turned once more towards the Castle, there stood one by his side whose gentle look made the dark cloud of saddening retrospection vanish from his brow, and a calm expression of happiness again settle on his features.

“Amy, you spoke truly,” he said, “a blessing comes with each uttered word of forgiveness that sends the peace of Heaven itself into the heart of him who so forgives—with the last feeling of anger I experienced towards her who has just left us, past the last shadow of evil from my onward path of life.”

And on the terrace where she once stood friendless and alone, gazing towards the heavens for help, Amy, no longer the unloved, one now

leaned upon her husband's arm and responded to his words by a quiet look of affection, till both turned their eyes towards the blue expanse before them. There the faint stars glimmered out from the pale sky, while some fleecy clouds travelled lightly over them; and silently on that fair evening scene both Amy and Cecil gazed feeling its holy stillness in their hearts and in their souls. Suddenly from behind a heavy cloud, the silver moon slowly rising, spread her soft yet lustrous rays over the whole view—a divine light seemed to gleam over the two exquisite countenances uplifted towards her disk, and the calm, holy smile the heavens wore appeared to shine in their dark radiant eyes, for deep as was the peace of Nature around them so deep was the peace that dwelt within their spirits.

THE END.

















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